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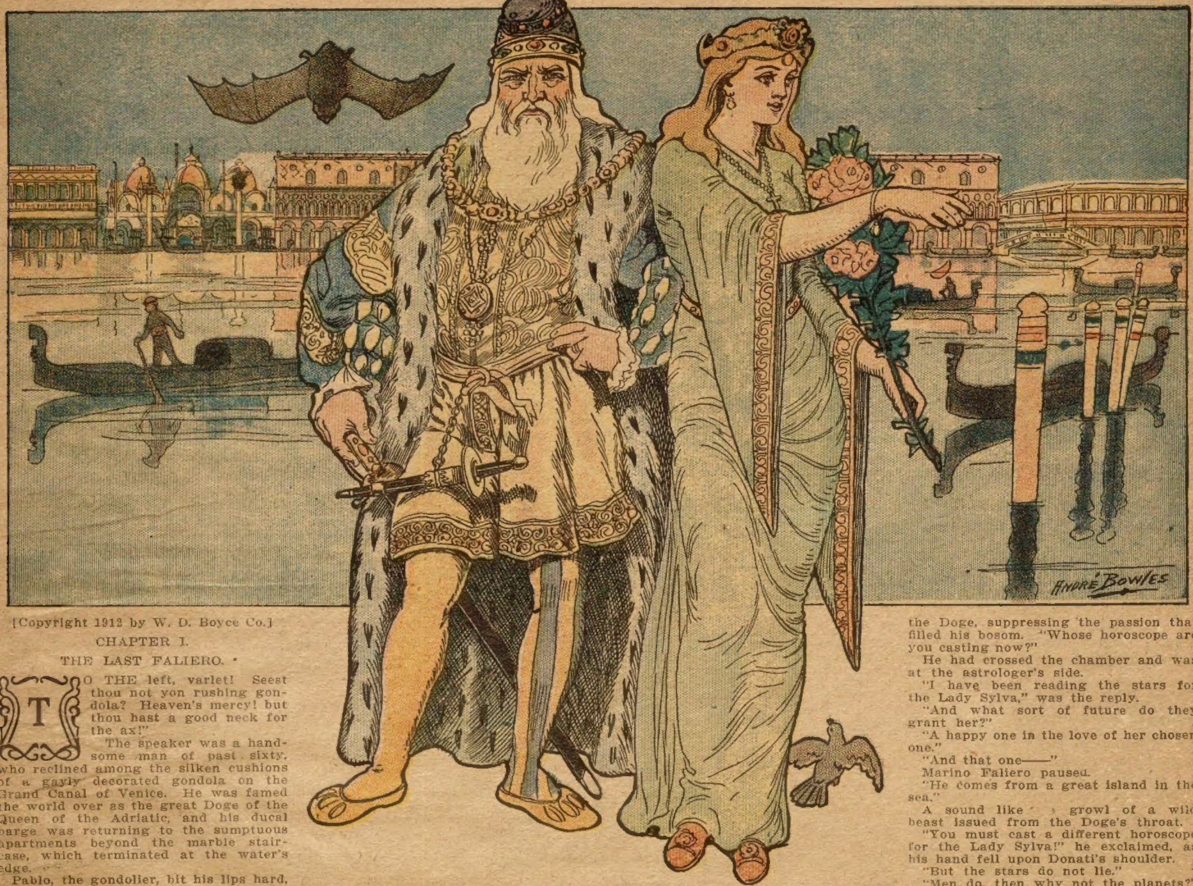
CHICAGO LEDGER

VOL. XL. NO. 13. CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 1912. SINGLE COPIES 5 CENTS.

The Doge's Daughter;

Or, THE VAMPIRE OF VENICE

By T. C. HARBAUGH



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CHAPTER I.

THE LAST FALIERO.

"TO THE left, varlet! Seest thou not yon rushing gondola? Heaven's mercy! but thou hast a good neck for the ax!"

The speaker was a handsome man of past sixty, who reclined among the silken cushions of a gayly decorated gondola on the Grand Canal of Venice. He was famed the world over as the great Doge of the Queen of the Adriatic, and his ducal barge was returning to the sumptuous apartments beyond the marble staircase, which terminated at the water's edge.

Pablo, the gondolier, bit his lips hard, and dexterously sent the craft to the left, narrowly missing a black gondola, which shot past like an arrow from a well-strung bow. The Doge caught a glimpse of the flying boat, shut his hands, and lost color.

"A narrow escape!" said he, half aloud and with a ferocious look at Pablo. "Had we collided I would have relieved the caitiff of his head."

Two minutes later the Doge got upon his feet and stepped from the craft upon the staircase. A great door opened, and a richly clad man came down to assist his master up the flight.

Marino Faliero refused assistance with an imperious gesture, and ascended with the suppleness of youth. The great portals clanged behind him, and Pablo felt his throat to make sure that it still intervened between head and body. He knew his ducal master only too well. He knew that a conspiracy existed against the Doge, that some of the dukes of Venice were engaged in it, but thus far the Doge had escaped their daggers, and still inhabited the ducal palace with his beautiful daughter, the Lady Sylva.

The Doge went straight to his apartments. When he closed the door behind him, he searched every nook and cranny of the splendid room, and then threw himself into the ducal chair.

"It must be true, the story of my daughter's infatuation for the English dog!" he cried, striking the table with his clenched hand. "The child of Faliero at that! I'll break her of this mad love, even if I have to cast her into the waters of the Lagoon." He roared out his sentences in his unchecked anger. "I wonder if the Englishman tarries in the city? What has become of my spies? Are they in the pay of the foes of the republic? Must I sit here unable to strangle this hated alliance? Where is the Lady Sylva? Nay, I'll summon Duke Salvo first."

He leaned forward and struck a golden call-bell. Its ring had scarcely ceased when a door opened and a face appeared.

"The Duke!" cried the Doge, and the visage vanished.

Presently the door swung open again, and a tall man stalked into the chamber. The Doge eyed him sullenly from beneath his glowering brows, and motioned him forward.

"What have you discovered?" he asked, abating naught of his dark frown. "Where is the English dog?"

Duke Salvo answered at once.

"We have searched the city, but till now we have been unable to find him A vessel cleared but this morning——"

"I care not for that. I want the Englishman."

"We shall not abate our search, your Serenity."

"See that you do not. If he escapes, some heads in Venice shall suffer. The rat has been disporting here too long. He would rob me of my daughter. But how goes the Council of Ten?"

"It still holds its sessions."

"And my name is heard there?"

Duke Salvo was silent.

"Let the lions growl!" cried the Doge. "I shall crush this accursed conspiracy, but the Englishman first. Go back to your work. Rake Venice as with a fine comb. All the gold in her treasury is at your command. What, my child the bride of that man! Better the wife of the black-robed head of the Ten!" And as the Duke left the chamber, the Doge fell back in his chair and ground out his insensate rage.

All at once he sprang up and darted from the room. He threaded several magnificent corridors, and at last opened the iron door of a small chamber. A shaded light diffused a dim light throughout the place, but it was enough for the Doge to perceive an old man seated at a table in the middle of the room. This man was Donati, the astrologer of Venice, a man distinguished for his prophecies as he received them from the stars. His snowy beard fell to his girdle, and he looked up as the Dodge entered, but gave no sign of recognition.

"Ha! I find you at work," exclaimed the Doge, suppressing the passion that filled his bosom. "Whose horoscope are you casting now?"

He had crossed the chamber and was at the astrologer's side.

"I have been reading the stars for the Lady Sylva," was the reply.

"And what sort of future do they grant her?"

"A happy one in the love of her chosen one."

"And that one——"

Marino Faliero paused.

"He comes from a great island in the sea."

A sound like the growl of a wild beast issued from the Doge's throat.

"You must cast a different horoscope for the Lady Sylva!" he exclaimed, as his hand fell upon Donati's shoulder.

"But the stars do not lie."

"Men do, then why not the planets?" roared the Doge. "You must make them lie. You must cast a horoscope that will rob this English rat of my daughter's love, as the Ethiopian robs the tigress of her whelps! Where is the horoscope?"

Old Donati shuffled underneath a pile of parchments on the table and drew forth one which he handed to the Doge. In an instant it was torn in twain, to be ground beneath the feet of Faliero.

"Thus your master treats such things!" he cried. "When does the Lady Sylva come again?"

"This very night, when the clock of St. Mark strikes the midnight hour."

"It is near that time now. You will prepare a horoscope according to my commands. Make it tell her that if she persists in loving this English caitiff, her future will be blacker than the dungeons of Venice. If you fail me, Donati, the waters of the Lagoon will swallow you, and the fishes of the Adriatic will feast on your flesh!"

"But, my master," cried the old man, drawing back, "I cannot read the stars wrong——"

"You must," interrupted Faliero. "There are headsmen in Venice. I am the last of the Falieri. You have half an hour before she comes to you. Make her tremble when you read the horoscope. You are mighty, Donati. She will believe you."

"For Heaven's sake spare me this deception."

"No!" cried the Doge. "I spare you nothing. Separate my child from this lover, and I'll load you with treasure."

"I am old. I have ahead but few days, for my life will go out within the year."

"It w'll go out sooner, if you fail to obey your master!"

Donati swallowed hard. His face became as white as his beard, and he fell back in his chair. There was no pity in the eyes of the great Doge. He drew himself erect, and folded his arms on his heaving chest.

"Remember!" he hissed, and he stepped back. "Cast a new horoscope. Make the stars lie, for you can do it. Forget not that I have a hundred dungeons at my command. I have tortures such as no city but Venice can know. Fail me, Donati, and I'll make your name accursed of all men. There shall be no grave for you, and men shall forget you ever lived."

Faliero crossed the floor to the iron door and laid his hand upon it. One more look he cast upon the old man in the the astrologer's chair, and then the heavy portal clanged behind him. In the outer corridor he paused and looked back. His hands were clinched and his face was white. As he turned away, something like a ghost vanished far down the arched corridor and caught the Doge's eye for a moment.

"Was it a spy cried the Doge, drawing his jewel-hilted sword. "Am I watched by the emissaries of the Ten? Have they penetrated to the precincts of the ducal palace? Woe to the spies who enter this gilded abode!"

He tramped on with the naked blade in his hand and cast watchful looks around. He paused at an open casement and looked out over the great city. On every side rose the splendid palaces of the City of the Lagoon. Far away stretched the water which held within its bosom a thousand-and-one dark secrets which no historian has revealed. Farther on, the Adriatic shimmered beneath the stars, the same stars which he had commanded to lie for his purpose, and everywhere he saw the gleaming lights of the gondolas and heard the merry songs of the gondoliers. It was a beautiful sight, but the soul of Faliero was not with it. Presently he opened the door of his ducal chamber and recoiled with a cry. There was something on the table which he had not seen before. A spring brought him to it.

In the middle of the table lay his portrait, and sticking in it, halfway to the hilt, was a stiletto which had been driven downward by a powerful hand.

CHAPTER II.

THE LION'S MOUTH.

The door had scarcely closed on the form of the Doge of Venice, ere a polished panel in the wall back of the astrologer's chair opened noiselessly, and a majestic young woman came forward. Her feet gave forth no sound on the heavy carpeting, which was largely composed of the skins of wild beasts gathered by the Venetian sea rovers. The most casual observer would have pronounced her a Faliero, for she had much of her father's mien. She had inherited her wonderous beauty from her mother who in her time was called the Princess of the Adriatic. The Lady Sylva was tall and stately, and, although twenty-five, she had the freshness of a girl of seventeen.

Donati had not heard her enter, for he was lying in his chair thinking of the visit he had just received, and not until Lady Sylva had placed her jeweled hand on his shoulder did he come out of his apparent lethargy.

"So the stars are to lie for me?" were the first words that greeted him.

The old man stammered and caught his breath.

"You overheard, then?" said he.

"Yes, father. But not even a fox can look through marble walls. What is this?"

Lady Sylva stooped and picked up the torn horoscope.

"My father was in a passion?" she went on, amid Donati's silence. "He does not approve of Leon's courtship."

"Far from it," answered the old man.

"And you will cast a new horoscope? Make it as terrible as possible, for the true one which you shall stranslate shall be the true voice of the heavens."

A smile brightened the face of the astrologer. He bent to his task at once, watched by the fair woman, who did not speak again till he was done. She laughed when he translated his horoscope, and congratulated him in her sweet voice.

"That is most excellent!" she exclaimed. "The Doge should be pleased with your skill."

"But I have lied to him."

"What matters it?" was the reply. "Did he not say that men are given to lying?"

The torn parchment was read to the woman, and she stowed it away in her bosom.

"They have not found Leon," she said, with a look of satisfaction. "They may ransack Venice, but the gods of the republic will hide him from the Doge's vengeance."

"Art sure of that, my lady?" cried Donati. "Have a care, for Marino Faliero's spies are all-powerful."

"I know their arts. They have the scent of bloodhounds, but they cannot find Leon Vincent, the Englishman."

"You are not afraid to meet your father?"

"When did a Faliero fear to meet any one?" she answered, haughtily. "My race has never knelt to fear. As to my father, who is almost in his dotage, he has enough to look after, let alone the love affairs of his daughter. He is even now watched by the conspirators of the Ten. They are longing for his life, and he must conquer this band or perish, as have other doges of the republic."

Five minutes later the astrologer was alone. The Doge's daughter had stolen from the room and left him to his reflections, which were not pleasant ones.

She repaired to her own apartments, and cast her eyes over the horoscope which prophesied her future happiness. Now and then she glanced at a large mirror which hung on the marble wall, and seemed to admire her transcendent beauty. All at once another reflection appeared on the polished surface of the glass. Sylva turned to come face to face with a dwarf who wore the ducal livery.

"What now, Beppo? she exclaimed, for the face of the little man denoted that he had something important to say.

"Another letter has been dropped into the lion's mouth," said the malformed being.

Sylva started.

"Who placed it there?" said she.

"Tommaso Todari, the spy of Duke Raphael."

"That infamous being?" and the hand of Lady Sylva clutched Beppo's arm. "You have a long arm. It can reach into the bowels of the bronze lion. Go thou at once, my dear Beppo, and bring me the paper which Tommaso has placed there."

"My lady it may have been removed ere this."

"Go!" almost thundered Lady Sylva. "I must see that paper. It is intended for the hated Ten."

The dwarf gave his mistress another look and departed. In a short time he was on the great piazza which fronted on the Grand Canal, and he was soon in front of the great lion into which ten thousand secrets and warnings had been placed.

The night was clear and majestic. Overhead, myriads of stars lit up the arched vault of darkness, and he heard the songs of the gondoliers, as they glided through the waters of the Lagoon.

Beppo squatted for a little while at the lion's head, all the time looking cautiously around, and suddenly his hand disappeared in the lion's mouth. Something in the dark depths of the bronze beast met his eager fingers, and he withdrew his hand. It clutched a folded paper, and he saw that it was sealed with wax which bore the signet of one of the most powerful dukes of Venice.

Beppo was thrusting the paper into his bosom, when he heard a footstep and he whirled with the quickness of a cat. A figure was bending forward, and Beppo caught sight of a pair of malicious eyes. In an instant his blood seemed to shoot in full volume to his brain. He was powerful, despite his physique, and all at once he freed himself from the hand which had dropped upon his shoulder, and stood on the defensive with a naked stiletto in his hand.

"Have a care, beast!" he hissed. "Little serpents are as deadly as their mothers."

There was a growl on the part of the other, and Beppo's antagonist darted at him, only to meet the point of the stiletto and to reel back with an inarticulate cry. Not satisfied with this, the dwarf sprang at him and struck again, as though driven to madness by the interference.

"There!" cried the dwarf. "If you live, go and tell your masters that there are blades in Venice which practice hath not dulled."

The man lay still at Beppo's feet. The dwarf stooped over him and gazed for a moment into the ashen face turned to the stars. All at once his hand dived beneath the Venetian's tunic and drew forth a packet, which he immediately appropriated.

In another moment he was running from the spot, and the lion was guarding a dead man on the piazza. Beppo did not halt till he ran up a flight of private steps of the ducal palace, and appeared suddenly to Sylva Faliero, who had not retired.

Her eyes lighted up with pleasure at sight of him and she held out her hand.

"You were successful?" she exclaimed. "Ah, I knew your arms could find the belly of the lion!"

The paper which Beppo had taken from the bronze animal was placed in Lady Sylva's hands, and she opened it after glancing at the crimson seal. He watched her read in silence.

"A thousand thanks, my Beppo," cried the beautiful creature. "I will ennoble thee some day."

"The thanks of the Lady Sylva are enough," gallantly answered the dwarf.

"Now, I have another mission for you," continued the Doge's daughter. "I will write a letter which you must deliver yet this night."

She went over to her writing table and sat down. Beppo watched her hand, as it moved rapidly over a sheet of paper, and when she had finished, she sealed it and handed it to him.

"You know the house with the narrow iron door?" she said, looking into his face. "It is the little house that stands near the old stadium by the Lagoon."

Beppo bowed.

"You will take this letter thither," continued Sylva. "See that no spies dog your footsteps."

"One will not!" cried the dwarf through clinched teeth.

"Why say you so?"

"Because the one who came to the lion's mouth, when I had taken out the message, lies there still."

A slight shudder seemed to pervade the woman's frame.

"Go! Find the house with the little iron door. You will deliver the letter to the man in the upper room, and Heaven go with you, Beppo."

As the dwarf turned, he drew from his bosom the packet which he had taken from the spy and cast it upon the table.

"I know not what it contains," said he. "It is for you to discover, my lady," and in another moment he was gone.

CHAPTER III.

THE VAMPIRE.

Not far from the ducal palace stood another, which was accounted one of the most beautiful in Venice. It faced the great Lagoon, and from its many windows a splendid view of the majestic Adriatic was to be obtained. It was known as Sforza's Idol, and had been erected by the ancestors of the man who now inhabited it, Raphael Sforza, one of the richest and proudest of the Venetian noblemen.

On the night which witnessed the scenes we have just recorded, a man sat in the most sumptuous apartment of this magnificent structure. His age might have been forty, though his face was hard, and showing the signs of luxurious living, as it did, it would have been difficult to have told how many years he had seen. He was the owner of the palace, and it was hinted that he was connected with the dreadful Ten, who figure so much in the history of the island republic.

It was evident that he was waiting for some one, for he showed much uneasiness. Now and then he glanced at a clock which ticked on a porphyry mantel, and then at the main door of the chamber. He was rewarded, at length, for footsteps were heard without the room, and a man entered.

"You?" cried Sforza, bestowing a look of disappointment upon the newcomer. "Why not Andrea?"

The man came forward and paused before the Duke.

"Andrea will never come," said he, whereat Sforza frowned and started.

"Never come?' he echoed. "Beware how you speak to me!"

"It is true, my lord Duke," was the reply. "I have just seen Andrea lying at the feet of the bronze lion, dead."

Duke Raphael leaped from his chair and snatched a sword from its place on the wall.

"Alas! I know not. He has a poinard wound in his chest, and he is quite de

"And you? Did you not see papers Andrea carried on his pers

"His secret pockets were empty. searched them well."

"Then the hand that slew him rob as well."

The varlet was silent.

"This has gone far enough," Sforza cried. "I strike tonight. Begone!"

In another instant the Duke was alone. Ten minutes had hardly elapsed ere he, too, left the chamber, which was not tenanted again till the door opened to admit the strangest being that ever paced a ducal carpet.

It was human, yet not so. It had the aspect of a huge bat, with the dark wings folded alongside a strong body, and the head was that of a vampire, with beady little eyes from which darted a light which comported well with the aspects of the sinbular being. Suddenly, the great wings spread, which added to the terrible grotesqueness of the man-bat, and when the pinions were once more folded, the creature advanced to Sforza's chair and dropped into its velvet depths.

A laugh not unlike the chatter of a bat issued from the head and echoed in the tesselated room. A claw-like hand reached out and struck a call-bell, which was answered by a man who came in and looked at the thing at the table.

"Is everything arranged?" asked the vampire.

The man bowed.

"There is to be no failure, mind you Cosmo."

"How can there be?" was the reply. "We know the way to the lady's apartments."

"And the guards of the ducal palace?"

"We are ready to meet them if necessary?"

"No bloodshed, if it can be avoided."

"We understand, my lord Duke."

"She is not to be harmed, even if she resists."

"No harm shall come to her."

"You will have the gondola at the foot of the staircase. When you have secured the prize, you will row at once to the House of the Bat."

"Straight to it, sir."

"That is all. Hold! If the Doge is awake, you will do nothing to disturb him."

The man Cosmo took his departure, and the bat-like being resumed his pose in the chair. Soon thereafter the great clock of St. Mark sent its musical tones across the opaline waters of the Lagoon, and the vampire sprang up.

"What if my minions fail me?" he cried. "What if they are outwitted by this damsel? But no! they cannot be. They are the real bravos of Venice, and nothing escapes their net. What a fool man is to be mad for a pretty face, and, by my troth! there is none prettier than hers in all Venice. Her English lover will soon be out of the way, and then I shall have clear sailing to her affections."

He rose from the chair, and, taking a small vial of almost colorless liquid from the table, left the room.

At that hour the palace of the Doge seemed buried in slumber. A few lights sent their gleams over the sleeping waters, and nothing broke the nocturnal silence but the rhythmic cadence of the gondoliers' oars.

The ducal palace had more than one staircase. There was one which led to the rear of the splendid structure, and it was reached by a secret waterway, which had been made for this especial purpose. It was not long after the departure of Cosmo from the Sforza palace, when a small gondola entered this little canal and glided toward the steps. Its very looks breathed of treachery, for no one was visible from the outside of the craft, and when it halted at the foot of the staircase, three men sprang out. Up the steps they hurried, reaching an iron door, which opened to them after a little manipulation of the fastenings. They disappeared within the palace.

If there were any guards on duty at that hour, they were not very watchful, for the trio, wearing dark masks, ran down the corridor, and were soon lost among the mazes of the palace.

The private apartments of the Lady Sylva overlooked the Adriatic, and these she had occupied from early childhood. Her maid-in-waiting had left her after her disrobing, and gone to her own chambers. Bianca was privileged at all times to come to her mistress, and a knock was always sufficient to obtain admittance.

Sylva had just come out of her first doze when she heard a knock at her door, and springing from her couch, she darted across the floor and asked who was without.

"'T's Bianca, mistress," said a voice.

The Doge's daughter at once unlocked the door and opened it.

The next instant she recoiled, with a horrified exclamation, and tried to shut the portal in the three half-concealed faces that greeted her.

"No harm, my lady. Just a little trick!" laughed one of the trio. "You will dress at once——"

"Not in your presence," cried Lady Sylva.

"In your own, then," was the answer, and the men drew back, but one thrust his foot across the threshold to prevent the closing of the door.

"Be quick about it," said the man.

THE SINGING VIOLET.

By ALVAH MILTON KERR.

I saw it yester-morning on the wing,
A bluebird flying 'cross the meadows drear;
The frozen grass-roots stirred with thrills of spring;
The first blue violet of song is here!

Cry for assistance, and the great Doge ill be childless!"

Fearful of violence, and wondering hat could have brought the men to the alace, Sylva Faliero donned her garients with haste. She slipped a stiletto eneath her bodice, and was in the act of leaving a note on the table, when one of the rascals sprang into the room. He snatched the note from beneath her hand, and thrust it into his pocket.

Down the staircase the Doge's muffled daughter was hurried by the three, and placed behind the curtains of the waiting gondola. The boat shot through the waters like a thing of life. It wound its way through the intricacies of the Lagoon, and presently came to a full stop at the foot of a house which fronted the inland waterway.

The daughter of Faliero was lifted from the cushions and carried into the palace. A steel door opened and then clanged behind her, and when the muffler was pulled from her head, she found herself in a large room which was strange to her. She was the sole tenant of the place.

When she had caught second breath and collected her thoughts, she arose and tried the several doors which opened into the room, but her strength was not able to move them. She was a prisoner in some place which could mean nothing but harm to her. At last she went back to the chair, exhausted by her efforts.

All at once there came to her ears the click of a lock, and the narrowest door was flung open to admit a creature, at sight of whom the Doge's daughter uttered an exclamation of horro. If she had expected to see a human being, she was disappointed, for she was confronted by a great bat, which spread its black pinions and advanced.

Lady Sylva felt her blood run cold. She leaped from the chair, and in her desperation assumed an attitude of defense, at the same time drawing her stiletto, which she clutched with all the strength at her command.

Into whose hands had she fallen? Surely this monster was not of the Venetian world?

CHAPTER IV.

THE EMPTY NEST.

The beautiful patrician had cause to wonder into what toils fate had thrown her. Many strange things had happened in Venice since its founding, but never anything like this. It transcended all the weird myths of the island city, and was enough to rob her of reason and chill every drop of blood in her fair veins.

The man-bat paused directly in front of her, and she caught the baleful glitter of the cunning eyes. Still nerved to defend herself to the last, she did not relinquish her hold on the dagger's hilt, but, stepping back, waited for the ogre to speak.

"How dost the beauty of Venice like her new nest?" came suddenly from the vampire.

Sylva drew herself to her full height, and replied with all the courage she could assume.

"This is infamous! By what right am I taken from my couch and brought to his place? I am the daughter of Faliero?"

"If you were not, lady, you would not be here," was the answer. It is the Faliero blood and the Faliero beauty that have brought you to the realm of the bat."

"But you are human," cried Sylva. 'Throw off your hideous disguise, that I may see you in your true light."

A laugh was the sole response.

"You dare not! Coward!"

The Faliero name was asserting itself.

The vampire retreated a few steps, and from the opposite wall regarded the Doge's daughter in silence.

"When you have become accustomed to your surroundings," said he, "I will come again. You shall have everything to your liking here, though this is not exactly the ducal palace. In yon room is a bedchamber as rich as your own. You have but to ring, and your slightest wish will be obeyed."

With a chivalric obeisance, which seemed absurd to come from one of such mien, the vampire took his departure, and Sylva heard his footsteps for a moment beyond the room. She stood for a moment longer against the wall, and then looked at the door which led to the chamber designated by her captor. Curiosity led her to open it. There before her was a couch as luxurious as the one from which she had lately been torn, and the other appointments of the place rivaled the richest ones in the ducal palace. She stood bewildered on the threshold.

Recollecting the letter which Beppo had taken from the lion's mouth, she drew it forth and read it again in the soft light that filled the room. It told her that enemies were working against Leon Vincent, her English lover. That letter and revealed his hiding-place in that quarter of the city to which she had sent Beppo. Then she took up the packet which Beppo had taken from the man whom he had slain before the bronze lion. It was of different import, for it had been intended for the Council of Ten, which was her father's greatest enemy.

When she had read these documents for the tenth time, she replaced them on her person. A singular drowsiness seemed to take possession of her senses. The chamber was filling with a sensuous perfume, which seemed to weaken her, and all at once she staggered forward and fell prone upon the silken couch.

Meantime, the great Doge was pacing the floor of his apartment in dire distress. The stiletto which he had found driven through his portrait, when he returned from his visit to Donati, the astrologer, was still there. He had not removed it. He knew what the warning meant, for it was a common one in the republic. More than one nobleman had found such a warning in his room and had been unable to trace the hand which had driven the steel through the portrait. Sudden death had followed the discovery of the iron-hilted dagger, and at least one Doge had perished by its stroke.

All at once, as though seized by a sudden impulse, he sprang across the room and wrenched the blade from the table.

"The cowards!" he cried. "They dare not face Faliero openly. They work in the dark like the lion. They dare not come to the ducal palace and confront the last of his race!"

He raised the dagger above his head and flung it across the room, to see it strike the wall and fall to the marble floor, where it lay like a vanquished gladiator.

Not for a moment that night did Faliero think of his couch. All sounds within the palace grew still. The brilliant lights fell upon his ashen face, and he remained in his chair with his hands clenched and his gaze riveted upon the sign of doom.

Daylight came at last. He thought of Donati, and quitted the room. Had the old man obeyed his command, and had he invented a new horoscope for Lady Sylva, which would break the bonds which existed between her and Leon Vincent? He would ascertain.

Pushing down the corridors, he opened the door which led into the astrologer's room. Donati was not there. The mystic appliances of the astrologer's art were scattered about the room. The couch in one corner had not been slept in. Faliero looked astounded. Donati had not left the palace in months.

Failing to discover the old man's presence, the Doge darted from the room. He would set his spies upon Donati's trail. Perhaps the old man had refused to obey him, and, in order to escape his vengeance, had hidden himself somewhere in the city.

Faliero had just turned into one of the handsomest corridors of the palace when he saw a young girl flying toward him. A wild cry pealed from her throat.

"The Lady Sylva! My mistress is gone!"

Ere the last word had died on the white lips that uttered it, the speaker fell into the Doge's arms.

"What is that?" cried the master of Venice. "What is this lie your lips have coined?"

She drew back the full length of the arms that held her.

"Master! master!" she cried. "Don't crush me with your arms. Don't kill me with your look."

"Speak, then, or by the blood of St. Mark! I'll send you to the block on the piazza."

"She is gone—my noble mistress!"

"Nonsense. Not even Lady Sylva dare quit the palace without my permission.

"Come and see," said Bianca, recovering her courage. "Come, master, to the bedchamber."

Faliero released the maid enough to permit her to lead on, and he followed at her heels.

"Behold" cried Bianca, throwing wide the door of her mistress's bedroom. "Look, master. The bed has been slept in. Nothing has been disturbed, for see! her jewels are on the table—her rings and all."

Faliero moved forward and took a survey of the bedchamber.

"Is nothing missing, girl?" he cried, whirling upon the breathless maid.

"Ah!" answered Bianca. "Her stiletto is not here."

"But what could have taken my daughter from the palace? You heard nothing, girl?"

"Nothing, master."

"You must sleep soundly."

"The walls of the palace are thick," suggested Bianca. "Where were the night guards?"

"Aye, where were the caitiffs? I'll send every dog to the block! You left Lady Sylva in good humor last night?"

"She went to her couch with the gondolier's song on her lips."

The Doge was puzzled.

"Ah, I see," he said, at last. "She has gone to the English dog. What know you of her infatuation for this varlet, girl?"

"Nothing, master," cried Bianca, clasping her hands. "My mistress shares her secrets with no one."

"I am drawing the net about this man. It is a net of steel, such as has never yet been cast in Venice. No fish escape it. What, the child of Faliero in love with one of the enemies of her country? Donati must have lied to me. To thy room, girl!" and Bianca, glad to escape the terrible looks of the Doge of Venice, darted away, and he stamped on the leopard skin beside Sylva's couch like one bereft of reason.

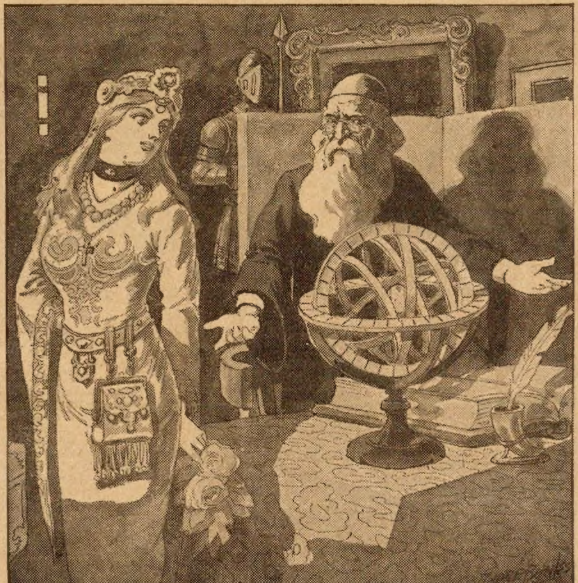
He did not quit that part of the palace till he had searched every apartment which belonged to his daughter. He raged like a desert lion whilst he prosecuted the search.

His passion was unabated when once more he reached his own chambers. The soft light of a true Venetian day now pervaded it. The long night was gone, and in its place had come the beauty of the Adriatic's clime.

He reached forth to summon the chief of the palace guard, when his eye fell upon the spot where he had last seen the iron dagger. A sudden start sent him forward. The blade was no longer there, but where it had lain was a splotch of half-dried blood, and written within it were his own initials!

Marino Faliero recoiled with a cry.

This extraordinary story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. A lot of strange and exciting things happen. Read it. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It only costs $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.



"So the stars are to lie for me?"

* * *

No, Alonzo, the cigarette habit doesn't always cause weak minds. In a great many cases it merely indicates them.

HARD LINES.

"I weigh about half a ton too much, doctor," said Balderdish, "and I want you to prescribe some dope that will cut down my circumference."

"Common sense treatment is the only thing for obesity," replied the doctor. "There's no use of taking drugs. You'll have to diet yourself and exercise."

"That's the same old dreary chestnut I heard from every doctor. What's the use of your medical science if you can't mix up some liniment that will take the fat off? Last spring you sprung that exercise gag on me and I went and blew myself for a horse and buggy and took a ride every evening and it didn't do a bit of good. I gained flesh rather than lost it."

"Riding in a buggy isn't exercise. You should take long walks."

"That's what you told me last spring. I was anxious to oblige, so I started out early one morning to walk five miles in the country. I hadn't got three blocks before a motorcyclist ran over me and left me a total loss. I was in bed for a week. When I was on my feet again I tried another long walk, being anxious to give your treatment a fair trial. I pushed myself about ten miles into the country and then played out, and a farmer came along on a load of hay and offered me a ride to town. I managed to climb up on the load, although it was about forty feet high, and when I was nicely settled in the hay something broke about the harness, and the team ran away and upset the wagon, and the whole load came down on top of me, and the wagon on top of the load.

"After I got over that experience I started for another ramble in the country. I was bound that you shouldn't be able to say I had neglected your advice. I hoofed it about sixteen miles and was completely out of wind, so I thought I'd take a short cut back through the fields, and a bull took after me and chased me all over the county and finally pushed me through a barb wire fence with his horns. If you could have seen me when I got back to town you wouldn't have offered 10 cents for me. If I had kept up that exercise a few more days I'd have been in a box."

"All you tell me, Balderdish, is no argument against walking. You mightn't have another accident in ten years. You don't have to go to the country. Walk up and down the streets in town."

"I tried that, too, Doc, and it didn't work. I didn't want my friends to see me chasing myself around as though I had gone batty, so I took a few walks after dark. Somebody on Lemon avenue had left a coal hole open, and I walked into it. It was a pretty large hole and I went right through it and landed on a pile of empty boxes, and the racket brought the police, who pulled me out and then gave me a ride to the police station.

"The next night I tried it again, and walked until I was tired, and then leaned against a residence to get my breath. Somebody thoughtlessly dropped a photograph album from a window overhead and I caught it with my dome of thought. The covers of that album had brass corners, and I can show you the dents in my skull where they hit it. No, sir, I've had all the walking exercise I want. You'll have to prescribe something easier."

"Well, let's talk about your diet. What are you eating now?"

"Never you mind what I'm eating. You want to get a list of the things I like to eat and then you'll tell me to cut them out and eat baled hay. I don't want any advice about exercise or dieting. I want a bottle of dope, so I can take a teaspoonful after each meal and before retiring, and imagine I'm getting willowy."

"Go home and take a good long drink from the kerosene can," said the doctor, impatiently, "and then set fire to your breath."

* * *

He Finally Yielded.

A moderately rich man in Wellington is entered in the "meanest man" contest. Some time ago this man went into a shoemaker's shop carrying a shoe of one of his children. On top of it and toward the toe was a hole about the size of a dime.

"How much to put a patch on it?" he asked the man.

"Ten cents," the cobbler replied.

The rich man took the shoe, ran his hand over the hole several times and walked up and down the shop, looked out of the window, and seemed to be in a brown study. Finally he said: "Well, I'll see," and walked out.

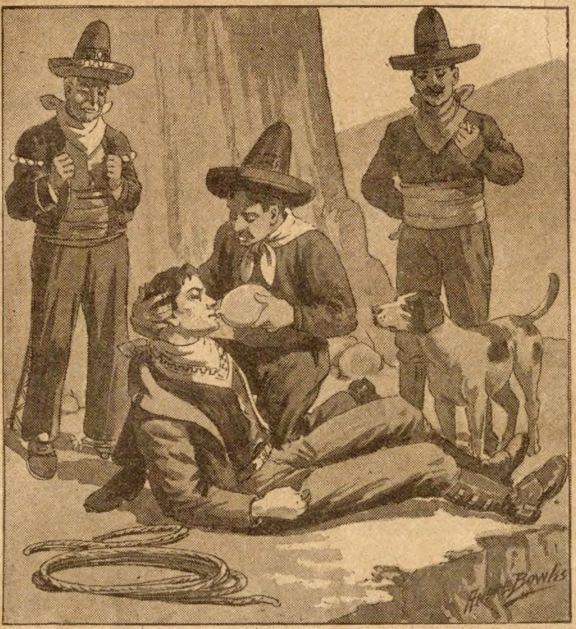
Not many days later the same man returned with the same shoe, asked the same question, and received the same reply. Again he paced the floor with his shoe in his hands, as he appeared to give serious consideration to the price. A second time he said: "Well, I'll see about it," and walked out, taking the shoe.

Some time afterward, and for the third time, there came the same man, bearing the same shoe with the same hole, but somewhat enlarged. This time he did not ask the price, but threw the shoe down on the bench in a manner that denoted some displeasure, and said: "Well, it has to be done, and you may as well rob me as some one else."

OUT WEST STORIES

M'MASTER, THE MAN

By Augustin W. Breeden and George McLain



He heard a voice which he knew was Villalon's.

DOWN, down went McMaster, the things he grasped so madly in his fall giving way like shadows. He encountered nothing solid until he found himself stunned and bruised on a shelf of rock twenty feet below the point in the mountain trail where he had slipped and fallen. As soon as he had recovered from his dizziness, the young American took a careful survey of his situation. He was on a projecting ledge, from which he could neither get up nor down. Below was a sheer drop of perhaps three hundred feet; above, the rock porched over and extended quite beyond both ends of his narrow prison. A fly might make the ascent, but not a man.

"So this is the end of my struggle to get back to civilization!" muttered McMaster, through clenched teeth. "Here I shall rot; and here that scoundrel, Roderigo Villalon, will some day find my bones—some day, perhaps, after he has made my beautiful Felicidad his bride."

It was now two weeks since McMaster, the young American mining engineer employed on the estate of the worthy old Mexican, Don Miguel Justino, had been sent out on a prospecting tour by his employer's manager, Villalon, with no one to accompany him but a couple of treacherous Yaqui peons. Two nights before, these Yaquis had deserted him in one of the wildest parts of the Sierra Madras Mountains stealing his gun and supplies from him, as he slept heavily after several nights of lying awake to guard them, and leaving him nothing save a powerful fieldglass and a few things in his pockets. All this at a time when the Yaqui tribe were on the verge of taking the warpath against their masters. The next day after the desertion of his faithless guides, McMaster had succeeded in trading a gold matchbox to an old halfbreed squaw for a haunch of smoked venison as hard and dry as rawhide; and with this tied on his back and his fieldglass for assistance, he began to try to extricate himself from this wild region. He had made good progress in spite of his handicaps, and was within a few miles of Rosita, the little village which formed the Justino headquarters, when he slipped and fell.

He had seen it all very clearly from the moment his guides had deserted; this prospecting tour was planned by Villalon to get him out of the way before Felicidad Justino returned from the convent school at Hermosillo. Felicidad, the daughter of the proudest family in the State of Sonora! Felicidad, the girl to whom he had vowed eternal devotion, and whom he longed to make his wife! All had been well with the young American until this girl had begun to look upon his ardent suit with favor; but from that moment on, the treacherous Villalon, who also aspired to ally himself with the house of Justino, had dogged his steps like a Nemesis. And now that one unlucky step had put him where even the cruel Villalon would be satisfied to know him to be.

McMaster thought of all this and then of his venison; and he was greatly pleased to find that it had not been lost in the fall. Then, adjusting his fieldglass, he found that he was indeed but a few miles from Rosita. From his prison he had an unobstructed view of the one long street of the village and of the little plaza before the church. In those high altitudes there is something about the atmosphere that seems to annihilate distance, and as McMaster leveled his glass, the village leaped up so close to him that it seemed as if he might almost speak to the people in the street.

He felt that his situation was not so bad, after all. He knew that a man might live a long time on a very little bit of nourishment, and the found a pool of clear, sweet water just inside the mouth of a little cavern that opened upon his ledge. He would remain alive and devise some means of signaling for help. Perhaps his faithful deerhound, whom the two Yaquis had either stolen or killed, would come to him. McMaster knew that he would come if those two outlaws ever let him escape from them alive. While he was still taking stock of his surroundings, the mist cut off the view on every side, and night came down, and in spite of the fact that it was midsummer, his bruised limbs ached with the cold.

"This will not help the soreness," mused McMaster, as he stretched himself at full length in the rock dust of the dryest part of his ledge. "But I am at least safe from Yaquis and mountain lions here; that is some comfort after two such nights as I have spent." And with that thought he forgot his troubles and slept the sleep of utter exhaustion.

When he awoke it was still pitch dark. His clothes were damp with fog, and he ached intolerably in every joint. But he heard a sound that made his heart leap for joy: it was his dog whining and barking on the cliff above his head. He got upon his feet with difficulty.

"Sorry you can't come down to me, old fellow," he cried, "and sorrier still I can't come up to you. This is a sort of Romeo and Juliet scene I don't admire, and the worst thing about it is, it's likely to run for a hundred nights."

The dog whined softly in response, and during the long hours which elapsed before daylight, man and beast found great comfort in each other's companionship.

When the mist cleared away next day, McMaster got another view of the village, and again he was surprised at the striking distinctness with which every object leaped up to meet his gaze. He recognized many familiar figures. There were the old inkeeper and his big fat, waddling wife; there was Pietro playing on his guitar as usual; and there was Felipe Gomorro, the village braggart, no doubt challenging the crowd to a game of monte. And there at times could be seen the young folks flocking across the little plaza in twos and threes. He had formerly looked down with pity on their squalid lives. Now, how happy they all seemed, and how good it would be only to be amongst them! Suddenly he saw a sight that he had been consciously or unconsciously looking for from the first, and yet it made his heart stand still for a moment as he looked. Felicidad tripped lightly across the plaza, and entered a little shop to which he and she were wont to go in the old days to buy sweetmeats. At that moment McMaster's heart yearned toward her as never before, and he realized with a shock the full meaning of his terrible isolation.

That day he watched with all a lover's vain longing for another glimpse of Felicidad. He was not idle, however, for very long at a time. He tore leaf after leaf from his notebook, and, writing an appeal for aid on each, made parachutes of them, but the wind was uncertain or constantly in the wrong direction. Meanwhile he had shouted himself hoarse and spent several hours waving his brown flannel hunting shirt to and fro in the hope of attracting attention. Late in the afternoon he saw the two ruffians who had left him to die in the mountains enter the plaza and unload their pack mules amid a staring throng; and he saw Villalon cross the plaza with a proud step and stop to talk with them. Then he heard a bell ring faintly, and saw the black-robed village priest come waddling out of the chapel and cross the open court to the rectory. The solemn tones of the bell made him think of the sweet Sabbath morning in his far away boyhood's home among the New England hills. He began to dream, too, of those sweet days of the summer before, and of the charmed nights, when he and Felicidad dreamed away the hours of darkness under the fragrant orange trees, while the mystic moonlight fell on the waterlilies close by, and far away a mandolin tinkled in the pulsing gloom. How fondly he had dreamed of making a home for this rare Castilian girl, whom he felt would be an honor to any man of any race. But now his dreams were at an end. He had often heard tales of the devilish cruelty and ingenuity of the punishments devised by the Spanish mind for an enemy, and he reflected now, that if Villalon had deliberately planned this death-in-life for him, it could not have been more fiendish. But McMaster was not daunted; he was determined to play the game out, or at least to die like a man.

That day he masticated a very little of his venison and tossed about an equal amount up to his dog. He wanted to keep the dog in the trail above, so that anyone who passed by would see him there, and perhaps be led by his strange actions to seek his master. It was the third day of McMaster's captivity that he saw his dog stalking some mountain sheep on the angle of the mountain, and while his master watched, he succeeded in bringing one down. This brought an additional pang to the prisoner, for he had read in "The Call of the Wild" how a dog may desert mankind and go back to the primitive state, and he feared that his hitherto faithful friend might do so.

One day was like another on that horrible cliff. To watch the village people come and go in the street until his arms ached from holding the glass; to wave his shirt by day and to wave bits of his burning clothing by night till the mist cut off all hopes of his signals being seen; then to lie shivering and aching in the rock dust till the sun came up again to warm things—this was the way McMaster spent each twenty-four hours—this and talking to his dog, that often whined sympathetically and tried to come down to him, but only succeeded in sending down a shower of loose gravel.

It was on the fourth day that McMaster, watching as usual, saw Felicidad cross the plaza with Villalon. He ground his teeth together with impotent fury and jealousy.

"She already believes me dead and is reconciled to it," he muttered. "Perhaps she is right in it! I am dead—dead to all the outside world. Ah, I shall soon be dead indeed, I suppose!"

For the first time since his captivity began, the young American felt himself drawn to go to the precipice and look over it at the appalling depths below. He pictured his bones scattered about on the stones below, as they would be after the vultures had finished with them, and wondered vaguely what would be said if they were ever found. What difference would it make? he asked himself. He had no immediate relatives to mourn for him, and the faithless Felicidad was not worth considering. Then his imagination gave him a fleeting glimpse of himself, gasping, helpless and idiot-like on the rocks at the bottom of the abyss—a thing from which the will, the power to control was gone—a mass of quivering flesh, with a yammering, cowering ego still struggling within it. He shrank back in disgust from the picture. No, he would never abdicate in any such manner; he would control his limbs, his voice, his thoughts, to the very last. He would not yammer, he would not cease to be a man and become a gibbering thing, even though that gibbering was to last only for a moment. How like a king a man was after all! He resolved to use his wits to extricate himself as long as he could stand on his feet, and then to lie down calmly and compose his thoughts and—but he refused to think of the end.

Two days later, McMaster saw Felicidad and Villalon leaving the plaza together, evidently for a horseback ride in the mountains, and then he nearly lost his senses. All day he held the glass in his aching hands and watched for their return; and at last, just before the mist came down, he saw them. They seemed to be chatting pleasantly together, for McMaster could see that Villalon was not making gestures and that the girl nodded her head from time to time as if in approval.

After this followed two or three misty days, with nothing to be seen but the bold crags rising like granite islands out of a sea of milk. The prisoner could only guess what was taking place in the village below, and he guessed the worst. The cold and exposure and living on meat and water alone were telling on him, and he felt himself to be a sick man. But when another sunny day came he was again busy with his field-glass, gazing, always gazing at his mirage of hope. He named over the familiar figures as he recognized them in the street. Early in the morning he saw Villalon and two other men come riding out toward the mountains, and speculated in an impersonal way on where they could be bound. All day he watched the waves of village life flow back and forth across the plaza, and even in the afternoon, when the time for the siesta came and all the shops were closed, he still watched.

Then, with the reawakening of the torpid village life, McMaster saw a sight that made his heart leap for joy. His dog — his own faithful dog — trotted across the plaza. Here was hope at last. But the dog soon disappeared into a side street, and the prisoner could not be sure whether he had been noticed or not.

That evening another strange thing occurred. Just as the mists were struggling with the winds to cut off the view, a paper came fluttering over the precipice above and fell at McMaster's feet. He snatched it up eagerly. Felicidad's own handwriting! He started hastily to read it; then dropped dismayed—it was addressed to Senor Roderigo Villalon, and had no doubt been dropped by him accidentally as he rode over some nearby mountain trail. Mustering up all his resolution to hear whatever news it might contain, McMaster read as follows:

"Roderigo Villalon,

"Amigo Carissimo:

"Since you have proved to me by both the guides and by the stage driver from Conception that Senor McMaster was untrue to me, and that he fled to South America with an American girl, I agree to cling to his false love no longer. You have been a true friend to me, and you are of a noble family, worthy to be united to the family of Justino; so I will keep you waiting no longer, but will marry you at the village church next Thursday.

"I no longer sign myself Felicidad, but rather Dolores, for mine is the saddest heart on earth."

"Next Thursday!" cried McMaster. "And this is Tuesday! I shall have to watch them go in at the church door and watch them come out again. But I will be a man," he cried, after a moment's thought, "I will be a man and endure it like a man!"

Next day McMaster sat on his cliff and watched the village people decorating the little church for the marriage. They came and went in gay, tripping groups. The whole scene moved across the lens of his field-glass like a panorama, yet he never for once lost consciousness of the grim reality of it all. Old Justino himself came with his fair daughter on his arm to view the preparations. How beautiful and saintlike was Felicidad's bearing as she walked slowly along! She was very sad; McMaster could tell that by the droop of her pretty head. And then came the hated Villalon, stalking across the plaza with his haughty air. At that moment an insane hatred, the centuries-old hatred of the Anglo-Saxon for the Castilian, accentuated by these days and days of suffering endured on the cliff, burned up in the bosom of the young engineer; but in the midst of it he remembered how near his end might be, and tried to fix his mind on better thoughts. But he continued to watch the wedding preparations till his senses swam, and he was forced to move back from the brink of the abyss lest he should swoon and fall.

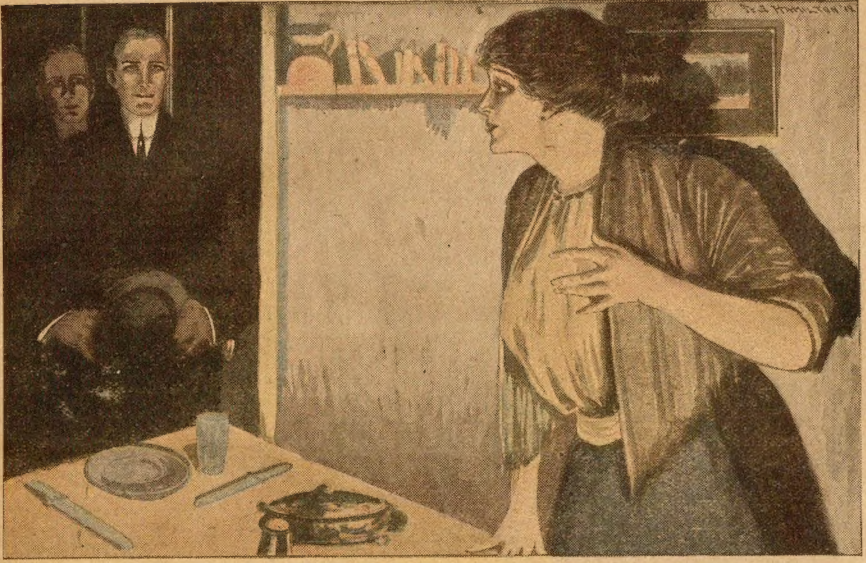
The next morning he folded his arms and waited grimly for the mist to clear

(Continued on page fifteen.)

SNARING MAIDEN FEET;

Or, RUTH HOLME'S STRUGGLE

By ALFRED B. TOZER



"We have news of your father."

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Begun in No. 12, March 23. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER VI.

A CALL FOR THE POLICE.

THE Why-So machine began grinding," continued the reporter, finding the Sunday editor a good listener, "and it all came out, house on the coast, title, English estate, murder, escape from prison, and all the rest. It makes pretty good reading when you come to group it all together. Well, after Holme—if he is Holme, which is disputed—had stirred everything which should have been allowed to remain quiet up with a big stick, and met with a defeat, and spent all his money as a last resort, he went over to England to take possession there, to secure cash to continue the fight in this country.

"There he came to another cropper. Holme's claims were denied, and he came near being arrested for false personation. So he is back in the city, trying to push his claim to a compromise."

"Who is fighting him?'

"The city is one of the defendants, as some of the property in dispute belongs to the park and boulevard system. Well, there are other points which I don't recall now, but it is a sure thing that there will soon be no claimant, as he seems to be all in. He can't fight without money, and everything he had is gone, the fortune he brought here with him, and even a cozy home—the place where Sir Jasper died, as is claimed—up on the coast of Maine. It was there that the convict made his way, on a stormy night, after his escape from prison. At least, it is claimed—and denied—that the man who was taken out of the sea there, and who made a will and died there, was Sir Jasper Holme."

"Denied?"

"Sure! The defense claims that the alleged convict was a fake, and that the present claimant is also a fake—that the man who died there never came out of the sea at all, was not the escaped convict, but was an accomplice hidden in the forest for weeks, waiting for a stormy night and a wreck. Oh, it is an odd case, all right, and somebody is doing a lot of lying about the facts. However, Sir Jasper Holme really did escape from prison just before that night, though it is claimed he was tracked south.

"I was sent out to interview Holme today, as I said before, and naturally hunted up his residence. Where do you think I found it? In the slums of the city, in the worst collection of two-legged wild animals on God's green earth, in the haunts of poverty and wickedness—in Holborn court."

The reporter laid down his pipe and walked the floor a moment.

"I found the claimant's room high up under the roof of a dirty tenement," he went on, directly, "high up under a slanting roof, and boasting one patched dormer window, one pine table, one broken chair, and one crippled stove. Where they sleep I have no idea. The man Holme was not at home—no pun intended—but his daughter was there, a beautiful girl of nineteen or twenty, with hungry eyes and starved cheeks. Educated and refined, evidently, but suffering from cold and hunger."

The Sunday editor blew his smoke rings out viciously.

"She opened the door a trifle when I knocked, but hesitated about letting me in. When I asked for her father she admitted me and gave me the one chair by the stove. I could have brought that stove away in my pocket, and all the fire it held away in my pipe.

"She shivered when I told her that I was a reporter for the Star. I take it the Star is not popular with her. She asked me if the paper hadn't done harm enough to her father without sending a reporter there to spy out their poverty. I promised her that nothing should be written which would reflect on their surroundings, and she thanked me. While she talked with me she kept her fingers busy with sweatshop work.

"'It is all we have to depend on,' she told me. 'Father is out in the city looking for employment.' She was so beautiful and so cheerful under all her burden of blighted hopes and dismal prospects that I wanted to put my hand in my pocket and help to warm the poor room, to fill the cupboard, but what could I do?"

"You left the child there hungry and cold!" asked the Sunday editor, shivering. "You might have sent her something from the street."

"I did," was the reply. "I sent her money, and marked it 'From Father.'

"There is hope for you yet," said the Sunday editor.

The artist came bustling in, flushed and cheery from his walk in the winter air.

"I've been to the coroner's," he said. "Old man found on the street, starved to death, or frozen—perhaps both. They have taken him to the morgue. Rather nice-looking old fellow he was, too."

"Did the coroner establish his identity?" asked the reporter.

"Yes; name of Malcolm Holme on papers in the pockets."

The reporter sprang to his feet and hustled on his overcoat and hat.

"Where are you going?" demanded the Sunday editor.

"Where am I going?" repeated the other. "God, man, where could I be going but to that poor girl in Holborn court?"

"Wait!" said the Sunday editor, laying down his pipe, "I'm going with you."

The convict's legacy was bearing fruit.

In the room high up under the slanting roof in Holborn court there was no light save that which came from a tiny stove. The fire, being of the most economical character, gave forth little warmth and no light to speak of, so the garret was both dim and cold. It was after midnight, and Ruth Holme sat alone before the twinkling blaze, looking pale and ill—not at all like the girl who had played in the shallows on the northern coast of Maine. A faded shawl was wrapped closely about her thin shoulders, but she shivered as the air grew colder.

She was waiting hopefully for her father, and now and then went to the door and listened for his footsteps in the hall or on the stairs. She had so listened and watched since the falling of night.

An unlighted kerosene lamp stood at her elbow, with, close at hand, a wisp of paper for lighting. A few pieces of coal lay near her hand. It had been her custom, always, since the great city had devoured their means of support, to have the room bright and warm when her father returned. At the first hint of his footsteps on the stairs, she would light the lamp and coax the fire into a brighter glow.

Her father had never remained away so late before, and she was anxious about him. Doubly anxious now because he was old and poorly clad, and not strong enough to walk the icy streets alone. Besides, the scanty food she had been able to set before him on his departure in the morning had been of the poorest.

As she listened she imagined all manner of mishaps in connection with his crossing the crowded streets. And yet, she hoped that his delay was occasioned by some light employment which he had been able to secure.

He must have met with some success, she cheerfully reasoned, for late in the afternoon she had received an envelope containing a small sum of money. The single line which accompanied the gift read "From Father," and yet it did not seem that the handwriting was that of the old man. She wondered why he had not brought the money in person, but was not suspicious.

It was all miserably different from the comforts, the luxuries, the companionship, of the old days in house at the head of the bay, but the girl was keeping up her spirits bravely. The longest and most dismal lanes, she thought, must bend at last toward brighter and more hopeful scenes.

A tower clock somewhere in the darkness struck one, and Ruth arose and stirred a stew which was simmering in a diminutive pot on the stove. Then, at one end of the table, she spread a snow-white cloth and made preparations for supper.

"He will be glad of something warm when he comes," she thought, "and his coming cannot long be delayed. Poor father!" she added, with a sigh, half of sympathy, half of despair.

There was a sound outside, and Ruth stepped to the door and listened again. The noises below were maudlin, the words incoherent, and the girl closed the door. The denizens of Holborn court were not noted for their early hours.

It was a place of poverty and poverty's companion—vice. Some who sheltered there were familiar only with the night, and some found cozy corners in drinking places and slept until daylight.

Presently there came a rattling knock at the door, and Ruth opened it cautiously. The bloated face the girl saw in the dim light was that of a man who had frequently passed a night under that roof, in some of the shabby rooms below. Ruth had observed him in the court, now and then, and had always shrunk from his half-tipsy, admiring glances.

The fellow lurched against the door-casing and made an unsuccessful effort to remove his hat, which was crushed low down on his head. His bleared eyes blinked at the girl foolishly, and she tried to close the door.

The fellow thrust a ragged shoe into the opening and leered at her. Shivering, now, with fright as well as with cold, Ruth opened her lips to cry out, but no words came. The terror she felt was akin to the horror of a nightmare dream.

"Evenin', Sweetheart!"

The intruder lurched heavily against the door, as if about to force an entrance, but Ruth succeeded in closing it. Mumbling and fumbling at the knob, the fellow remained in the hall for a moment, and then half fell and half stumbled down the stairs.

Ruth hoped with all her heart that her father would not come at that time. He would be no match for the burly brute who had annoyed her, and might receive serious injuries if he attempted to resent the intrusion.

After a time Ruth went to the door again. The unwelcome visitor was dimly seen at the bottom of the first flight of stairs, wiping blood from his face and muttering inarticulate oaths. From what the girl could distinguish of the words, she received the information that he would be up again after resting.

Then, while the girl waited in dread, a quick light flared up far down in the dark well of the building, and footsteps were heard. The new light was only the quick combustion of a match, but Ruth welcomed it. It might be an officer who would come to her assistance, she thought.

While the intruder sat mumbling on a step below, feet were heard ascending, and the girl called, "Father!"

There was no answer from below, but her voice seemed to have served to direct some wanderer in the labyrinth of poverty and wretchedness, for the steps came on up. The brute in the gloom below moved clumsily and tried to regain his feet as the footsteps came nearer, but his effort only succeeded in laying him flat on his back in the dirty hall.

Realizing that more than person was ascending, and doubting if her father would bring a guest to that wretched abode, Ruth closed her door and stepped back into the room. The steps came on and stopped at the recumbent figure on the floor.

"Here," the girl heard a voice saying, "what are you doing?"

"Girl up stairsh!" the fellow answered, with a rumble of profanity. Ruth, listening at the door, turned away to the tiny fire.

"Have you been up there annoying that girl?" she heard the first voice saying. "If you have, I'll push your face in!"

"Oh, let him alone!" another and deeper voice exclaimed. "He's drunk."

"My girl!" broke in the thick voice of the fellow. "Wouldn't let a feller in. Goin' back, d'rectly. Goin' back an' mash door in!"

"Oh, you are going back to mash the door in, are you?"

That was the voice Ruth had heard first. The words were followed by a muttered curse and a great racket on the stairs.

"There! I take it that will hold him for a time!"

The words were accompanied by a light laugh, and then the footsteps came on up the stairs. It was quite evident that the intruder had been thrown bodily down to the next floor.

Ruth stood close to the door and listened. It might be that her father was with the men who were coming. Or it might be that they were bringing good news of him.

There was a soft knock at the door, but it was not her father's knock. Filled with apprehension, yet hopeful, Ruth opened the door again and looked out.

Two men stood there, one facing the open crack between the door and the casing and one farther back in the shadows of the hall. The girl stood waiting with her heart storming in her breast.

"Miss Holme?"

The voice expressed inquiry as well as greeting.

"Yes, Miss Holme."

It was a very faint and uncertain voice that answered.

"You don't recognize me in this half-darkness, of course," the other said. "I called here this afternoon to see your father."

"Yes," said Ruth. "I remember."

There was a pause, as if the man outside the door had come to the end of his wits and was waiting for suggestions from his companion, to whom he now turned.

"We are from the Star," said the other,

as if for the purpose of filling the awkward gap.

"Yes, I understand," Ruth replied, still keeping her place by the door, and making sure that it was not opened wider. "You are seeking father? Well, he has not returned, and I am anxious for him."

She hoped they would go away with the announcement, but the figures did not move. From the dim regions below came the sound of an angry voice raised in threats.

"We have news of your father," the reporter said, gravely. "If you will kindly let us step inside?"

Instantly the guarded door was flung open.

"You have news of father?" Ruth repeated. "Why does he remain away. You have seen him? You come from him?"

In all their lives the reporter and the Sunday editor had never faced a sterner situation. How were they to tell this girl the truth?

When they were in the room, the door closed, and the maudlin complaints of the man who had been thrown downstairs dying away in the distance, Ruth essayed to light the lamp standing on the table. Her hand trembled so that the task seemed beyond her capability, and the reporter took the blazing wisp from her fingers, touched it to the wick, and set the chimney in place.

As the blaze sprang up he presented his friend, but the frightened girl scarcely acknowledged the introduction. Her pleading eyes were still fixed on the face of the reporter.

"You spoke of father," she said, "and I see by your face that all is not well with him. He is old and weak, and may be ill somewhere. In that case, you must take me to him."

As Ruth spoke she turned toward a little closet to secure her wraps, and the reporter clutched his companion by the arm.

"Why don't you help me out?" he demanded, in a whisper. "I can never find the words to tell her."

"And yet she must be told—and at once."

The Sunday editor saw that Ruth was getting into her street garments and took a step forward.

"Now!" whispered the reporter. "Don't let her get ready for the street. Tell her now—if you can!"

Ruth turned back in time to see them whispering, to catch the low tones of their voices, but not the words they spoke. Then, while they conferred together, each asking the other to tell the miserable story, she stooped over the stove.

The fire was nearly out, and the father's supper steamed no longer. She started to replenish the blaze, but the sound of their voices again reached her ears.

"Why do you stand whispering there?" she asked. "What is it you are saying? If anything has gone wrong with father, surely I ought to know it."

"Something has gone wrong," the reporter said.

"I know," Ruth said, then. "I see it in your averted looks, in your pitying eyes. Father is dead!"

The girl did not faint or cry out in her misery as the story was told. She sank into a chair and sat looking straight before her. In that bitter moment all the events of her young life came back to her, gliding before her mind as a panorama of the past to unroll itself under the eyes of a drowning person.

She saw the flowers and pines of the old home by the sea. She saw the white-haired father walking in the garden with her hand clasped in his own. She heard the signal guns and saw the mounting beacon as on the night of the wreck. She saw a pale-faced man lying in the surf at the point of rocks. She remembered her premonitions of evil in connection with the convict's legacy. Then she came to the removal to the city and the slow frittering away of their hoard until nothing was left. Then the visit to England and the suspicions which had greeted them there.

Then her mind came back to that last fatal day. Her father had died alone in the night and the storm, as that other man would have died had she not come to his assistance. It seemed the very irony of fate that she should have brought back to life for a few moments the man who was to wreck their lives.

The reporter and the Sunday editor stood like children caught in mischief. They could find no words of comfort for the girl. Their own eyes were not dry.

"What is to be done?" asked the latter.

"I don't know," was the reply. "It was a blind impulse that brought us here, and we must think it out."

"Where is—where—is—father?" the girl asked.

"The police——" began the Sunday editor.

"I understand," Ruth said. "May I go there?"

"It doesn't seem as if you ought to go there," Harley, the reporter, said. "It is a dreary place."

Ruth moved toward the door, not accepting the kind denial.

"Will you come with me?" she asked, facing the two men.

There was a rustling sound outside, and Harley hastened to open the door. The unwelcome visitor again stood there, soberer than at his previous visit and with anger blazing in his eyes.

"Come out of there!" he shouted, looking the reporter impudently in the face.

Harley opened the door, took careful note of distance, and launched a blow in the sneering face, which dropped the man against the wall and then in a huddled heap on the floor. Then a shout came from below and the brass buttons of an officer showed in the round ray of a searchlight.

"Billy," the officer called to a man below, "just run down and ring for the wagon. There are toughs up here fighting over a girl, and I'll run the whole push in!"

Harley stepped out and started to explain, but was met by the shining barrel of a revolver.

"Tell it to the judge in the morning," he said. "I saw you knock that man out. Where is the girl? Tell her to march out here."

Ruth stepped into the doorway, saw the man on the floor, the weapon in the hand of the policeman, and dropped back unconscious.

The policeman lurched forward and laid a heavy hand on her arm.

CHAPTER VII.

A NIGHT AT THE STATION.

Harley advanced as the policeman bent over the unconscious girl, anger in his eyes.

"Wait!" he said, brushing the officer's hand away. "We will care for the girl. We came here to assist her."

Officer Young drew back angrily and struck at the reporter.

"Keep away!" he thundered. "I'll break your face if you don't. You're lucky if you are able to take care of yourselves."

The blow was neatly avoided, and Harley turned back the lapel of his coat, disclosing his newspaper badge.

Officer Young snorted with rage and stood between the little group and the head of the stairs.

"My name is Harley, of the Star," the young man said.

His explanation was made in no gentle tone, and the officer's rage seemed to grow with it.

"I don't care who you are," he almost shouted. "I saw you sandbag this man. In you go—the whole push of you."

"All right," Harley replied, grimly. "It won't take long to get out again, and it may be just as well to place the girl in care of the police matron for the night. Will you kindly order a taxi for us?"

"The nerve of you!" scowled Young. "I have ordered a taxi for you, and one that the judge will collect pay for in the morning."

There was a rush of wheels below and the sharp clang of a gong. The patrol wagon was backing up against the curb.

A little crowd had assembled on the walk, and one of the loungers said a few words to the man in charge of the wagon and the latter started up. Young called to him from the top landing.

"Bring up a couple of men, Van," he said. "I've got a couple of fresh ones and a wounded bum on my hands."

"This is all unnecessary," the Sunday editor said. "We'll go to the station with you."

"You bet you will!" said the policeman. "You bet you'll go to the station with me. And the girl, too, only no matron for her—she'll be locked up with the rest of the women of the street."

Argument was useless, so the two men, standing guard over the still unconscious girl, remained silent until two more policemen reached the landing. Harley waited in the hope one of the new arrivals would recognize him, but they were both strangers. One of them, however, was a detective-sergeant and took charge.

His first move was to seize the prostrate man by the collar and try to lift him to his feet. The figure was about as inert as a bag of meal, and fell back as soon as the force was released.

"Hello!" the sergeant said, then. "What's been happening to this man? There's a cut on the head that looks like the work of a billy. Search these men and see which one struck him."

"I struck him with my fist," Harley explained. "He insulted this girl and I threw him downstairs. He came back to the door, and I knocked him down. Now, the quicker you take us to the station the quicker we'll get busy in the interest of this girl."

"He says he's a reporter for the Star," Young cut in. "I don't believe it. I've seen too many of them fake tin badges."

"Handcuff him," the sergeant said, still examining the man's wound. "This chap is badly injured. Got him?" as the steels clicked on the reporter's wrists. "Then hustle them all down to the wagon. I'll bring the girl down."

As the sergeant spoke Ruth opened her eyes and looked about. Harley turned his face away so she would not see the manacles on his wrists, but the Sunday editor stepped forward.

"You can't remain here alone," he explained, as calmly as was possible under the circumstances, "and so we are taking you to a place where you will be cared for until morning. Then other arrangements will be made."

"You are kind," the girl said, her eyes filled with apprehension at the sight of the hard faces and the uniforms about her.

"We're all kind," laughed Young. "We'll see that you have a place of shelter for sixty days or so. Hustle down to the wagon, all of you."

The newspaper men had often taken short rides in patrol wagons, but never before as prisoners, while the experience was wholly new to the girl. Not a word was spoken during the journey to the station, but when the red lights of the police building flared out over their heads Ruth shivered with fright.

"Out you go!" shouted the sergeant. "Here, you," he added, calling to an officer on the station steps, "get a stretcher and carry this man in. He's all in from whisky or wounds—I don't know which. Better get a doctor, anyway. You for the desk sergeant, you three. Hustle in, now."

Much to Harley's disgust, the man behind the night desk was an entire stranger. He attempted no explanation, therefore, but only asked for the officer in charge of the precinct, Captain Preston.

"You'll get no satisfaction out of Preston," the Sunday editor whispered. "The Star has been bombarding him too heavily of late."

Faint and sick, and half-numb from fright, Ruth staggered and would have fallen to the floor, but for the support quickly given her by the Sunday editor. The incident excited the mirth of the policemen gathered about.

"None of that!" cried the sergeant. "Stand up, there!"

"What is it?" asked the man behind the desk.

"I found these men engaged I na fight in a slum building in Holborn court," said the sergeant. "At least they had been fighting. So Officer Young reported to me. There was a wounded man lying on the floor, and I sent him to the hospital room and ordered a doctor. I want these people held until the case can be fully investigated, especially the man with the cuffs on."

"What were they fighting about?" asked the desk sergeant, with a snarl. "Over this rather good-looking girl?"

"That's it," replied the sergeant.

"May I say a word?" asked Harley.

"Say it to the judge in the morning," replied the desk sergeant. "Take them down, Dennis, and lock them up."

"And the girl?" asked Harley.

"Lock her up!" scowled the officer. "Get out, all of you. I've had enough of this case. Try it before the judge."

"You're a brute!" exclaimed the Sunday editor. I shall take great pleasure in putting a piece in the Star about you."

"What's that?" shouted the desk sergeant.

"You are an inhuman beast!" the excited Sunday editor went on. "If the Star has any influence with this administration, you'll be looking for a job inside of a week."

"I'm fired by some crook about three times a night," roared the desk sergeant. "Take him away, before he fires the whole force, from the chief down."

A door opened at the back of the long room and an officer beckoned for the prisoners to advance. By this time Ruth had reached an understanding as to the situation, and her thin cheeks flamed at the indignities being put upon her. She opened her lips to speak, but an officer half pushed her along on the way to the cell block in the rear.

Before the door closed on the three prisoners, however, Captain Preston, in charge of the precinct, made his appearance, walking in from the street. The two Star men were well known to him, and his face took on a satisfied expression as he saw the predicament they were in.

"What is this?" he demanded, motioning for the officers to remain where they were.

"Fighting over a girl, sir," the detective-sergeant said, "and a man seriously hurt. We're holding them to await the doctor's report."

"I see," said Captain Preston. "I see. Well, what have you fellows of the Star got to say for yourselves?" he added, with a grin.

"Not a thing," the reporter replied with a grin. "We'll do our talking before the mayor and the trial board."

"Don't say that I didn't give you a chance to state your side of the matter," the captain said, with a frown.

"We can state the matter in a minute," the Sunday editor said. "This girl is Ruth Holme. Her father was found dead in the street shortly after midnight, and we went to her room to inform her of the matter and to do what we could for her. While there the drunken brute referred to as injured appeared and insulted her and was knocked downstairs. If you lock us up, kindly send the girl to the matron."

An officer entered the room and saluted.

"The wounded man is bad off, sir," he said.

"Then hold these two men and place the girl with the matron," directed the captain. "I would release you tonight, gentlemen," he said, facing the two, "but this report stands in the way of my taking any responsibility in the matter. I'm sorry. Your paper has never been fair with me, but I'm always anxious to do the right thing."

"Thank you for nothing," the reporter said. "We'll be obliged if you'll leave your ugly picture at the business office. We shall probably want to use it in the paper. Good night, Captain!"

Ruth was taken away toward the matron's rooms, and the Sunday editor and the reporter were locked in a cell together.

"Speaking of new sensations," Harley said, sitting down on the shelf-like bench with an exasperating grin at the Sunday editor, "this is it!"

"If the artist was only here," sighed the Sunday editor.

"We can give him points fof his illustrations," laughed Harley. "We'll call the tale, 'Parted by Fate; or, 'Why the Captain Threw Us Down.' I reckon that will make a shunt line on the first page of the Sunday issue. What?"

"Get back to sanity," advised the other. "What is your opinion of the come out of this thing? What about this tramp being seriously hurt?"

"The man is drunk. He'll be all right in the morning, except for a dark brown taste, and they'll turn us loose."

"I hope you are right, sonny, but you're wrong so often that I have my fears."

"That old tramp!" cried Harley. "You couldn't kill him by tipping the courthouse over on him. You bet he'll be all right in the morning."

"And the girl?"

"Why, we'll have to look out for her a bit. She strikes me as being about as capable of fighting her way, alone, in the city, as a wax cat would stand in a bakery oven. We've sure got to look out for her."

"If she will let us," the Sunday editor added.

"Why do you say that?"

"Because she seems to me to be an innocent, independent, sensitive creature, who will want to creep away and hide herself from the sight of man after tonight. We are face to face with an odd proposition, sonny."

The prisoners did not try to sleep that night. The men in the cells about them sang, wept, raved and swore at one another. The officers came in just before daybreak and turned the hose on a man who was raving with delirium, advising him to avert another cold bath by keeping quiet.

The air was close and strongly scented with impurities, and none too warm, and the two newspaper men were delighted when an officer appeared shortly after seven o'clock and unlocked the door to their cell.

"How's his Nibs this morning?" asked the reporter. "I mean the man I kicked down stairs last night?"

"Gone," was the surly reply. "He had a souse on. That's all. You are to be turned loose without going before the judge. Get out."

"Whose orders?" demanded Harley. "We demand a hearing. Got a kick coming."

"Headquarters gave the order," was the answer. "You're lucky to have a friend there."

"We can see the girl before we go?" asked the Sunday editor.

"The girl?" repeated the officer.

"Yes; Miss Ruth Holme, the lady half a dozen officers insulted last night."

"Oh, yes, Miss Holme. She's all right. Went away half an hour ago. Woman the matron sent for came after her. Friend of yours?"

The two, deciding to resent their unjust treatment at anotner time and place, made their way to the fresh air outside without speaking. It was a brilliant winter morning, and the cool, sweet air was grateful after the confined stenches of the cell block.

Their first move was to return to the station building by another entrance and ask for the police matron.

"Off duty at seven," was the short answer they received.

"When will she come back?" asked the Sunday editor, indignant at the officer's scant courtesy, and resolved to have it out with him later on.

"Where does she live?" asked Harley.

"Mrs. Hilton? Don't know, I'm sure."

The tone also assured the questioners that he did not care.

(Continued on page twenty-three.)

NO WORDS WASTED

A Swift Transformation Briefly Described

About food, the following brief but emphatic letter from a Georgia woman goes straight to the point and is convincing.

"My frequent attacks of indigestion and palpitation of the heart culminated in a sudden and desperate illness, from which I arose enfeebled in mind and body. The doctor advised me to live on cereals, but none of them agreed with me until I tried Grape-Nuts food and Postum.

"The more I used of them the more I felt convinced that they were just what I needed, and in a short time they made a different woman of me. My stomach and heart troubles disappeared as if by magic, and my mind was restored and is as clear as it ever was.

"I gained flesh and strength so rapidly that my friends were astonished. Postum and Grape-Nuts have benefited me so greatly that I am glad to bear this testimony." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

"There's a reason," and is explained in the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

UNTANGLING THE THREADS

A DETECTIVE STORY

By ANTHONY SIMMS

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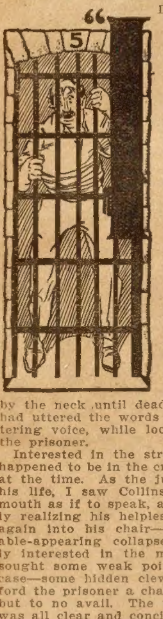


“I DID not kill Peter Stone!”

John Collins peered through the bars of his cell door at me, and although he claimed his innocence in most emphatic tones, I could not gaze upon the hard lines of his face, the malicious gleam in his partly closed eyes, without attaching a certain amount of credence to the strong chain of circumstantial evidence that had been fastened around him. Found guilty of murder in the first degree, by twelve of his peers, Collins had been sentenced to death. “Hanged by the neck until dead.” Judge Brown had uttered the words in a cold, unfaltering voice, while looking straight at the prisoner.

Interested in the strange case, I had happened to be in the crowded courtroom at the time. As the judge spoke away his life, I saw Collins arise, open his mouth as if to speak, and then, evidently realizing his helplessness, sink back again into his chair—an utter despicable-appearing collapse. Always keenly interested in the mysterious, I had sought some weak point in the State's case—some hidden clew that might afford the prisoner a chance for his life—but to no avail. The testimony offered was all clear and concise. Besides having the preponderance of the evidence, the prosecution proved incidents in the life of Collins that indicated him as being a man of merciless character.

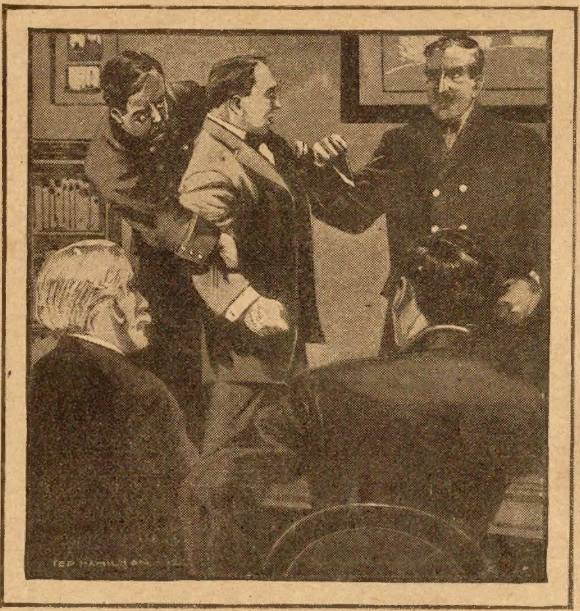
As a newspaper reporter I have always tried to do a certain amount of detective work, other than that demanded by the regular routine of my position. In fact, by the application of careful deduction, I had, in my short career, saved two apparently hopeless unfortunates from the gallows. Hence I had earned quite a reputation as a living exponent of the theories of Sherlock Holmes. In the case of Collins, however, I could perceive no opportunity of adding to my laurels, so, after hearing him convicted, I strove to forget the case from a detective's standpoint, and contented myself with writing four columns for my paper, in which I described accurately and without sentimental prejudice the courtroom scene, and in a few closing paragraphs weighed the evidence and the “summing up” of the opposing counsels, upon neutral scales, that the public might know why the jury had pronounced the death sentence.

I had scarcely finished correcting the proof of my copy when a messenger entered the office with a note for me from the warden of the county jail. The warden stated that Collins wanted to see me at my earliest convenience. I realized at once that the convicted man could only desire my presence for one purpose, and I must confess that my pride was flattered by this tribute to my ability. To have this culprit, so conclusively proved guilty, call upon me to save him was indeed a marked compliment, whether deserved or not. I determined at least to hear what he had to say. After dismissing the messenger, I made my way to the jail. En route, I again thought over the main points of the case.

John Collins had been for ten years employed in the Joliet penitentiary as a sort of warden over the life prisoners—that is to say, he supervised that part of the prison wherein those serving life sentences were lodged. Before his employment in this capacity, Collins himself had been a convict—convicted upon the charge of assault and battery, with attempt at manslaughter, brought against him by a man upon whom he had inflicted severe injuries during a street brawl. While serving his sentence, however, his conduct had been so strictly in accordance with prison rules, that he quickly became a favorite of the officials, and by the exercise of their influence he was paroled, to take a position in the prison. Within a short period he had become a section warden, but as the State proved in its case against him, this position only served to draw forth his real nature, as, shortly after obtaining it, he exhibited symptoms of a malicious disposition. The State even established the fact that he solicited fees for favors from the prisoners under his direct supervision, and those unable to contribute to his fund were made to suffer severe punishment.

Collins could offer no defense in respect to these accusations and many others of a similar nature that the State hurled against him; hence I was puzzled as to what he could possibly say to me that might change the aspect of his case. At first I anticipated discovering some valuable point that he had suddenly thought of, but my arrival soon dispelled this idea, for the man now before me could make but one statement in reference to the crime.

“I did not kill Peter Stone!” Collins repeated this muttered avowal of innocence in a husky voice that seemed to tremble with powerful emotions. I studied him closely, and while gazing at him, I let my mind dwell upon the many details leading up to the death of Stone. It seemed a significant coincidence that Stone, imprisoned for murder, should himself, while enduring punishment for his wrong, become a victim of similar treachery. It was while Collins was employed at Joliet that the horrible crime for which Stone was sentenced was committed in Chicago.



The officers took hold of him.

Upon the morning of December 18th Olive Nelson, a young woman living with her parents in an exclusive neighborhood of the North Side, was found dead in Lincoln Park. A bullet wound over the heart gave sufficient evidence of foul play. A park policeman, who claimed he heard the shot, endeavored to locate the sound, but had been unable to find any trace of trouble. Being in the winter months, the park was practically deserted, hence, aside from the police officer, there was no one who had heard the pistol report, and lacking corroboration, the officer was prone to accept the incident as imaginary. However, the next morning brought about the discovery of the girl's body. Investigation proved that she had been that evening in the company of Peter Stone.

At the inquest held over Miss Nelson, the mother and father testified that Stone had been engaged to be married to their daughter, but because of ugly rumors they had heard regarding the young man's character, the engagement had been broken. The girl then had begun keeping company with Charles Thompson, an old childhood friend, who had grown to love her madly. According to the parents, the girl soon forgot her affection for Stone in a growing fondness for her new suitor. Upon the fatal night, Miss Helen had been called to the telephone about 7:30 o'clock in the evening, and after conversing a few moments over the wire, announced her intention of going for a walk. In answer to her father's query, the girl had said that she and Thompson had just arranged to meet at Center and North Clark streets, to stroll through the park together. A few moments following her departure Thompson called, and to the surprise of the parents, he knew nothing of the intended walk, nor had he telephoned. This discovery worried Mr. and Mrs. Nelson, neither of whom could even conjecture as to why their daughter had deceived them. Thompson was deeply troubled, and permitted the incident to excite a burning jealousy within him. While all three were discussing the peculiarities of Olive's actions, Mrs. Nelson was summoned by the ringing of the telephone, and was soon apprised of the facts by the daughter herself. It was Peter Stone who had 'phoned, claiming that he was Thompson. Olive had failed to recognize his voice, and had believed him. He asked her to meet him, and she had left the house fully expecting to meet Thompson. She told her mother to have the man she now really cared for wait, as she would leave Stone immediately and return home. This information relieved the anxiety of the parents and calmed the temper of Thompson, but that was the last ever heard of Olive until her body was found in the park.

Needless to say, Stone was quickly convicted, but because of the evidence being merely circumstantial, a lenient jury condemned him to a life sentence. Thus it was that Peter Stone came under the jurisdiction of John Collins. Stone, who became Convict Number Nine, realizing that his entire life was to be lived in monotonous confinement, decided to make all about him share his misery, as if their own could not furnish them with sufficient cause for reflection and repentance. He began early to arouse the anger of Collins by assuming a bold indifference to prison discipline. He carried his pugnacious attempts at creating dissatisfaction to such an extent that Collins gradually grew to hate him; and Collins himself, being of a mean nature, Stone soon received ample reward for his misdemeanors. Under pressure of Collins' abuse, he was finally cowed into submission, but Collins, being relentless, continued his mistreatment of Stone, even after Stone was plainly subdued. With Collins, prosecution invariably became a matter of persecution. He would beat Stone for the least offense, and often the prisoners would be awakened at night to hear Stone being condemned for some trivial misbehavior during the day.

This state of affairs continued for over a year. At Christmas Stone was denied his holiday portion, and when he cursed at Collins for practicing this sort of cruelty toward him, several prisoners saw Collins enter his cell and strike him a vicious blow, and as Stone lay prostrate upon the cement floor, these same prisoners heard Collins threaten his life. It was these prisoners who convicted Collins, for the morning following this threat, Stone was found dead in his cell. His body was horribly cut and mutilated.

“I did not kill Peter Stone!” again declared the man before me. With the facts just related in mind, you can imagine my difficulty in believing this declaration of innocence. However,

A Druggist's Favorite Kidney Remedy---Cured Himself.

Fifteen years ago I had an attack of acute kidney trouble. I consulted a physician who gave me medicine which only relieved me for a time. After discontinuing his medicine my trouble returned as severe as before.

Having heard of Swamp-Root I gave it a trial and can honestly state that three dollar bottles cured me, never having any sickness in fifteen years. I have sold Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root as a druggist for many years and can give it the very best of recommendations at all times.

You are at liberty to use this statement any time you wish.

Respectfully,
W. C. SUMMERS,
1219 Central Ave. Kansas City, Kas.
With Grand View Drug Co.

County of Wyandotte } ss.
State of Kansas }

On this 11th day of August, 1909, personally appeared before me, W. C. Summers, who subscribes to the within statement and made oath that the same is true in substance and in fact.

CHARLES WILSON,
Notary Public.

Letter to
Dr. Kilmer & Co.,
Binghamton, N. Y.

Prove What Swamp-Root Will Do For You.

Send to Dr. Kilmer & Co., Binghamton, N. Y., for a sample bottle. It will convince anyone. You will also receive a booklet of valuable information, telling all about the kidneys and bladder. When writing, be sure and mention The Chicago Ledger. Regular fifty-cent and one-dollar size bottles for sale at all drug stores.

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$1 A WEEK
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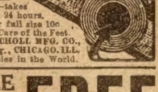

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something in the man's voice—perhaps the pathetic weakness of what should be strong, full tones—impressed me, and after a moment's deliberation I decided to lend this unfortunate the best of my ability.

"You can offer no possible alibi?" I asked.

Collins smiled. It was not a pleasant smile, but rather a helpless, hideous grin.

"I told them at the trial that I was in my room," he muttered.

"But you could not prove it. The experts stated that Stone had been dead at least five hours when his body was discovered at six in the morning. That means that the murder must have been committed before eleven. Were you with any one between six, when you first struck Stone that evening, and eleven? Did you speak with any one? Did any one see you in your room during those hours?"

His brows contracted as he tried to think.

"No," he said finally, "only young Wilson. I mentioned him at the trial."

"He saw you in your room?"

"Yes."

"What time?"

"About nine."

"Who was Wilson? Ah, yes, he was the jailer that disappeared. How long had he been employed at the prison?"

"About a month."

"Did you hire him?"

"No. I could not hire any one."

"He was discharged?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"Insubordination."

"To you?"

"To the warden."

"Give me the details."

"The warden discovered Wilson in his private office, sitting at his desk, using his stationery."

"And the warden discharged him immediately?"

"No, he reprimanded him. Wilson was impudent and then the warden fired him."

"When was that?"

"The morning of the murder."

"Did your attorneys try to locate Wilson?"

"Yes, but they couldn't find a trace of him. The State's attorney has him in hiding. He does those things, you know. Anything to gain a conviction is his motto."

Collins laughed bitterly, wrinkling the coarse lines of his face into a repulsive expression. I could not help but sympathize with his statement, because I have encountered many unlawful practices in my various investigations, which prove conclusively that the fundamental theory of the State's attorney's office is the old adage: "It takes a thief to catch a thief."

"How long was Wilson with you?" I asked my client.

"Only a few moments."

This disappointed me, as I had begun to attach a great deal of significance to Wilson's visit, but I could scarcely hope to establish a reliable alibi by a witness who had only been with Collins for so short a period. However, I persisted along the same line of questioning, for even though the hope of Wilson proving of any consequence was remote, he alone offered the only clew for me to work on.

"What was the object of Wilson's visit?" I continued.

"He came to tell me some nasty things Stone had said about me. That is really why I struck Stone that night."

"After you had left Stone where did you go?"

"Back to my room."

"Did you see Wilson again?"

"No. Not after leaving Stone's cell. I told Wilson to give the beast a drink. You see I hit him pretty hard."

"Could any one enter a cell besides you?"

"No, only the turnkey."

"Who was that?"

"Jones. He testified to having seen Stone after I had returned to my room. He claimed Stone was not cut after I had left him."

"How long afterward was that?"

"About half an hour," he answered.

"No one but Jones then could possibly have entered the cell?"

"No."

"Yet you ordered Wilson to bring Stone a drink."

"He had to pass it through the bars."

"Was Wilson on duty?"

"No."

"Why did you instruct Jones then?"

"Because Wilson happened to be with me. I was too excited to think."

"Jones then claimed Stone was not seriously injured by your attack, and you did not return to his cell that night?"

"I swear to God I did not!" and Collins opened his eyes wide as he stared upward fearlessly. I could not help but partially believe in him at that moment, his expression became so sincere, his voice so clear. Cautioning him to be silent, I departed, determined to exert my best efforts in his behalf.

My paper granted me a week's release, and the editor wished me success. Another big story such as I had given him about the Glares mystery (Glares being one of the men I had saved from the rope) probably suggested itself to the newspaper acumen of my employer. The State's attorney reluctantly gave me permission to proceed. Fear of the press probably prompted his courtesy. Relieved of my regular duties, I immediately set out to vindicate John Collins. Cognizant of the difficulties of the task before me, I determined to act with all possible speed.

To be sure, I was not optimistic as to the ultimate results, but Collins had pleaded with me, and—well, I could not resist the opportunity. My operations limited to merely vague theories, unable to discover any basic facts upon which to build my case, and myself in serious doubt as to my client's innocence, I could progress only slowly. In fact I made such little headway during the first few days that my client gradually lost the sublime confidence that he had at first placed in my capabilities. With only five days to live he grew almost insane, as he, in fancy, felt the rope slowly tightening about his neck. I interviewed him each day, in the hope of gleaning some little heretofore forgotten fact that might aid me in unraveling the mystery, but in vain. The only plea that my client could offer, the only statement he could make regarding his innocence, the only evidence he could submit in his defense, was the hysterically muttered: "I did not kill Peter Stone!"

Time and again he shouted this at me, as if he thought that perhaps I was too well convinced of his guilt to work sincerely to prove his innocence. The shadows of the gallows instilled a horrible fear in him, and as day followed day, without my being able to console him, his eyes grew wild, his voice grew shrill, and he yelled defiance at the fate which had doomed him. The dismal corridors echoed his cry, and other prisoners, inspired at the hopelessness of it, and nervous from the monotony of their dungeon existences, moaned their miseries in accompaniment to his ghastly shrieks, until I, not able to stand their outbursts, rushed madly from it all, impelled to exhaustless efforts, in order to save this poor victim from a miscarriage of justice, providing he was in fact guiltless of the terrible tragedy.

At night, in the quiet of my room, I could hear, in fancy, the outcry of the poor creature in jail. In my dreams I heard him, and sometimes I would suddenly awaken as if disturbed by some sound or intrusion, and straining my ears to listen for a repetition of what had startled me, I would invariably hear, as if the breeze carried the words from the county jail to me: "I did not kill Peter Stone!"

The first step to be taken in clearing up the mystery surrounding a crime is to discover, if possible, a motive. The State had not really proved a clear motive against Collins. He should have been committed for manslaughter, inasmuch as he killed Stone while overcome by an uncontrollable temper and without premeditation. But Stone, having been protected by the walls of the penitentiary from any one who might have possessed some definite object in seeking his life, the ordinary process of deduction gave me but little assistance in fastening the guilt elsewhere.

I called upon Mr. Nelson, the father of Stone's victim, and found him an amiable old gentleman. With tear-bedimmed eyes and choking voice, he told the details of his daughter's death, while Mrs. Nelson sat beside him weeping softly as her husband related the frightful story. My purpose in seeing Mr. Nelson was to refresh my mind with all of the incidents leading to Stone's imprisonment. Although the murder of the Nelson girl had no direct relationship to the murder of Stone, very often in these cases one can discover the key to an entire situation by some trivial happening during the period prior to the crime in question. This idea also prompted my interview with young Thompson. I found him at his office, and while he did not seem to care to discuss the fate of the girl he had loved, I finally persuaded him to tell me the story as he knew it. His version agreed perfectly with Mr. Nelson's. I will never forget the bitter manner in which he condemned Stone, nor the softness of his voice as he spoke the name of the deceased Miss Nelson.

Although I learned nothing of consequence from my two interviews, I did not consider them a waste of time. To my surprise, Thompson had not learned of Stone's death. Having gone abroad immediately after Stone's trial, and having just returned the day before my visit, his ignorance of the occurrence was excusable. He smiled when I apprised him of the peculiar murder of his former rival, and expressed the desire to congratulate Collins. Congratulations, however, would not save my client, and I dare say Collins would not have received them in a very joyous mood.

Upon the fourth day of my work—twenty-four hours before my client would have to meet his doom—I arrived at my conclusion: "Wilson, the discharged jailer, had killed Peter Stone." My theory was based on his visit to Collins the night of the atrocious deed. He had gone to my client's room, and had excited him by repeating certain insulting remarks Stone may or may not have made about him.

The average man will not precipitate a quarrel between others unless he has

(Continued on page sixteen.)

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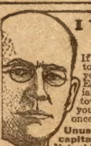

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Fat Women.

In this country, outside of the museums, very fat women are not very attractive. Admiration has gone to the slender woman, even to the one with the waspish waist, laced in as small as the stomach, liver, and a few other superfluous organs will allow. But the fat woman has been passed by, and her more slender, graceful sister has carried off the laurels for beauty of feminine figure.

But in the land of the Moors things are exactly reversed. There the fat woman reigns supreme. The slender woman is passed by with a look of pity or contempt. According to the Moorish idea of beauty, a really handsome woman ought to be so fat that she can only waddle, not walk. The fatter she is the more beautiful she is considered. If she can attain two or three hundred pounds of flesh she is considered a dainty damsel, and is the envy of all her sex.

The Moorish shape, if shape it can be called, approaches the perfection of feminine beauty when it resembles or rather exceeds the circumference of a barrel, or some other large measure.

What a paradise for the fat woman! There she can eat and drink and feast to her heart's content, denying herself nothing, living an easy, indolent, luxuriosu life, with no horror of accumulating fat, but rather rejoicing in it, for every pound of superfluous avoirdupois she can gain only adds that much to her beauty.

There the ambition of a woman is to acquire bulk. She spends no time trying to reduce her waist measure with harmful corsets, but she lets it expand and go its own sweet way. Physical culture she would regard as an enemy to beauty, and to take Turkish baths and diet herself would be considered the height of folly. She wants to be beautiful, and to be beautiful she must be fat.

* * *

Anti-Social.

A well-known educator tells of a school of advanced ideas in Boston, wherein no pupil is ever punished in any way, the individuality of every child being held too sacred for repression.

One day, it appears, soon after her entrance into this school, one little girl came home with a face wet with tears and her mouth covered with blood.

The mother was greatly alarmed, and, taking the child into her arms, asked what had happened.

The story of what had happened was sobbed out to the sympathetic mother. One Sammy Parker, it seemed, had struck the little girl and knocked out a couple of teeth.

When the unfortunate youngster had been restored to equanimity her father, who had in the meantime put in an appearance, naturally enough wanted to know how the teacher had dealt with Sammy.

"She didn't do anything?"

"Well, what did she say?"

"She called Sammy to her desk and said: 'Samuel, don't you know that was very anti-social?' "

* * *

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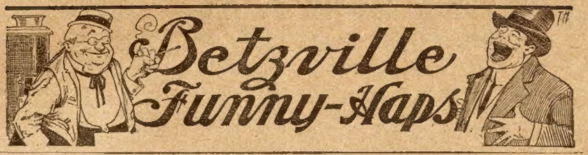


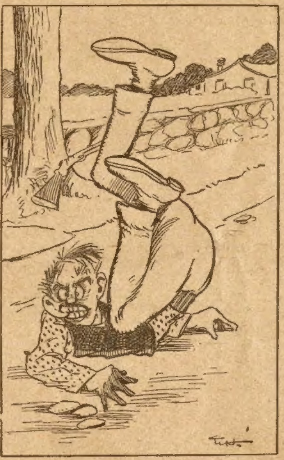
His Two Natures

By Ellis Parker Butler

[Copyright by W. G. Chapman.]

The most permanently uncomfortable man in Betzville is Rocco Mackintosh, and it is all due to his two natures, which he inherited from his parents. From his mother, who was Rosa Gallucci, he inherited the hot-blooded nature of Italy, and from his father, Sandy Mackintosh, he inherited the cautious nature of a Scot, and while both these natures are excellent, they do not mix well, and in Rocco Mackintosh they did not mix at all. They remained at all times distinctly separate, like the streaks of fat and lean in a piece of bacon.

Three weeks ago last Wednesday, Rocco woke with his hot Italian nature in the saddle, so to speak, and an overpowering desire came upon him to write a Black Hand letter, so he sat down and began to write one, but when he was about half way through, his cautious Scotch nature warned him that he was doing a very dangerous thing, and that if he was discovered he might be taken to court and made to pay a fine. But when he decided not to write a Black Hand letter, his warm Italian nature rebelled and insisted that he write the letter. So, to placate both his natures he wrote the letter and addressed it to himself. Then he took the letter to the postoffice and mailed it.



Seized his ear in his teeth and bit until he cried for mercy.

When his Mackintosh nature received that, no matter what happened, he would not put $100 under a stone, as the letter commanded him to do. Instead he went out and borrowed a shot- the letter, the next morning, he was very much excited. Never before had he received a threatening letter, and it mad him properly angry, but he swore gun from Uncle Ashdod Clute, so as to be ready for the worst.

Along about four o'clock that afternoon his Italian nature took hold of him, and he sat down and wrote a threatening letter to himself, ten times worse than the first, and mailed it himself.

When he received this letter, the next morning, his Scotch blood fairly boiled. He was so angry he could hardly hold his pen while he was writing another Black Hand letter to himself that afternoon, but he was wise enough to take every precaution and before he went to bed he barricaded the house by pushing all the furniture against the doors Even then he was so excited he could not sleep, and several times in the night he arose and wrote Black Hand letters to himself.

By the end of the week he was in such a state of fear that he only ventured from the house once a day, and that was to mail himself the letters he had written, but the letters kept getting more and more threatening, and they all mentioned last Wednesday as the last day of grace. If the $100 was not put under the flat stone at the crossroads by noon, that day ample vengeance would be taken on him.

Every one in Betzville noticed the change that had come over Rocco Mackintosh, but no one suspected what his trouble was, and Wednesday morning dawned upon a placid scene. The flat stone at the crossroads was as flat as ever, and the crossroads crossed as usual, but Rocco Mackintosh was twice as cross as the roads. About ten minutes after eleven he put on his hat, and he instantly knew he was going to the crossroads to see whether the $100 had been put under the stone, as he had advised himself to do. When he saw himself take a dagger in his hand, he knew he must be prepared for the worst, and that he had a cruel Italian nature to deal with. So he took his shotgun in the other hand and sallied forth, bound, at all costs, to protect himself.

But hardly had he stepped outside the door than he weakened. What, after all, was $100 as compared with his life? He went back into the house and took ten ten-dollar bills from his sock, and went out again. He walked to the crossroads and tucked the money under the stone, and then stood back behind a tree to see what would happen. In a minutes or so he laid his shotgun on the ground, and stole slowly toward the flat stone. Glancing cautiously around, he lifted the stone, picked up the $100, and slipped it into his pocket, with a cruel Italian chuckle of glee.

At that moment his stanch Scotch nature rebelled. Never would he be robbed in this manner! With a cry of anger he dashed for the shotgun, and at the very moment that he laid his hand upon it, his left hand drew the trigger. Then ensued a terrific struggle, in which Italian nature had all the advantage. Try as he would, he was always too close to himself to use the shotgun, while the dagger was just the weapon for use at close quarters. With a groan he dashed the shotgun from him, and closed in upon himself. Again and again he wrested the dagger from himself, only to have it wrested away again. At length he put his knee upon his chest, and pinning himself down thus, he seized his ear in his teeth, and bit until he cried for mercy. Then, putting his hand in his pocket, he pulled out the ten bills and put them in his pocket. He had triumphed.

All the way home his proud Scotch nature gloated on this unequaled achievement, and he took his seat at his dinner table with a feeling of great content. He felt in his pocket to see that the $100 was still there, and it was.

"That for the Black Hand!" he cried, snapping his fingers, and he set to work devouring his meal.

Suddenly he paused, and a look of fright and amazement came over his face. He paused with his fork halfway to his face, and stared at it. He was eating spaghetti! Instantly he knew what had happened. In his terrific struggle with himself he had mixed his two natures, and the Italian nature had triumphed after all! He had allowed himself to take the $100 away from himself. He had allowed himself to blackhand himself.

As he finished his meal he laughed merrily to think how he had carried out his threat, and at the same time the tears ran down his cheeks as he thought how he had been victimized. It is a terrible thing to have two natures.

Another Funny-Hap will appear next week, called "Rhinocolura and Fido." Read it; you will laugh.

* * *

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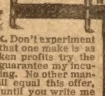
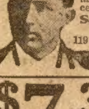
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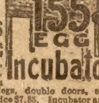

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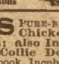
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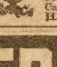
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THE BARON'S REVENGE;

Or, THE CASTLE'S GHOST

By PIERRE DASTARAC

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Begun in No. 10, March 9. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER IX.

STORY OF THE GHOST.

WHEN the Baron de Lasouche, followed by the thoughtful and abashed Winters, joined the group on the terrace, the young Duchess called out to them:

"Well, it is time you arrived. We were just going out to see whether the ghost had not waylaid you."

"I beg your pardon for making you wait, but I had to make a few arrangements for my comfort for tonight. I wished to have the room thoroughly aired, yet I did not care to leave the shutters open, for fear some passing tramp or petty thief might enter unnoticed. If I die tonight, I wish the castle's ghost to have full credit."

"Then it is true—you really intend spending the night in the haunted room?" asked Armand, anxiously.

"Yes, unless one of my guests insists on exchanging places with me," replied the hunchback, with one of his rare smiles.

"Not I!" cried the Duchess. "Not even if you paid me a thousand francs a minute."

"Don't be so rash, Duchess," laughed Sir John. "Wait until you hear the Baron's story. The ghost may be a very charming gentleman to meet, and ——"

"Charming! I like the expression, when we already know that he has caused a score of deaths."

"I'm sure I would not mind sleeping in the haunted room if ——" began Armand, timidly, but the hunchback cut him short with the tense remark:

"My offer applies to guests only, Armand. You are one of the family, therefore I would not give up the room to you."

Armand said no more, though the thought that his father was to spend the night alone in the haunted room filled him with an uneasiness that was almost akin to fear, and which his sternest reasonings with himself could not lull to rest.

"At least tell us the story," suggested Antoinette, noting Armand's evident disappointment, and wishing to make him forget it by changing the conversation.

"Yes, the story!" exclaimed the Duchess, drawing her chair closer to the hunchback's, so as not to lose a word of the narrative.

"Do you want me to hold your hand, Duchess?" suggested Sir John, mischievously.

"John, if you don't behave, I shall have to put you out. Take example from Lord Winters. See how grave and silent he is," remonstrated the Duchess, half-amused and half-provoked.

All eyes turned toward Winters, who at the mention of his name had started like one awakened from a deep study. His face was truly grave, his eyes, darkened in thought, gazing on the group in an almost unseeing stare. The Duchess' remark, which he sensed rather than heard, recalled him to himself, and he said in apology for his abstraction:

"I was waiting to hear the story, and I thought that silence was the best way of showing that I was listening."

"You are right," admitted the Duchess. "We are all a lot of chatterboxes. Baron, we are listening."

The hunchback had taken a chair, and with his eyes fixed the greater part of the time on Winters, giving the others only an occasional glance, he told his story.

"The legend, or rather the history, of the castle's ghost dates back several hundred years to the time of feudalism, when this castle was the stronghold of the warlike Barons de Lasouche, noted throughout Southern France for their wealth and bravery. The story sounds much like the tale of Bluebeard, since the uneasy spirit, which all these years has roamed earthbound throughout the castle, is that of a much married man, when in the flesh."

"There, Duchess!" cried the irrepressible Sir John. "Didn't I tell you? A lady's man!"

"John, behave!"

"Sir John is right, Duchess," remarked Le Bossu; "he was a lady's man, one who held an almost supernatural sway over women's hearts. He had but to be seen to be loved; therefore, when the time came for him to choose a wife, he was able to have his pick of the richest and fairest of the land. He married, therefore, his wife bringing him a large dower. Within a year she was dead. There was some talk about the suddenness of the demise, but as nothing could be proved, the Baron was left unmolested, although the relatives of the young bride held a deep grudge in their hearts against the husband, this grudge increasing, when, before the year's mourning was over, he remarried, again choosing a girl of wealth. The second marriage lasted scarcely two years, when he again became a widower. Again there was talk, but Jacques de Lasouche, as this Baron was called, was too strong and powerful for any one to dare make open accusations; only the families of the dead women, brought together by their common grief, expressed among themselves their thoughts and suspicions. A third bride was brought to the castle, then a fourth, all dying in the same mysterious way, after only several months of marriage, their marriage portions increasing the wealth of the already wealthy and powerful Baron. He had some difficulty in securing the fifth wife, but his wonderful magnetism won the girl's heart, and the fear of his power gained the parents' consent. This wife he loved, and she, no doubt, would have lived for years, had she not died in childbirth, leaving him a daughter as sole reminder of the one love of his life.

"This death made the already cruel and heartless Baron a perfect fiend, his only god being gold; his only love, the child of the dead woman. He became a miser, hoarding his gold, and ever seeking more, wishing to make his daughter the wealthiest heiress of France. His household at this time numbered hundreds of soldiers and retainers, with whom he protected himself, as well as fought and conquered his neighbors, taking possession of their belongings and castles, the dread of Southern France, hated and feared by all.

"Thus passed the years. He did not remarry, not wishing to give a stepmother to the daughter he adored. When the child reached the age of fourteen, the Baron's cruelty and constant warring had so angered the country for miles and miles around, that an alliance was formed among the other feudal barons to destroy the common enemy. To these were added the families of the former wives, who wished to avenge the deaths of their cherished daughters. With an army of several thousand men, the siege of the castle began. For twelve months the Baron resisted the attack of the enemy; then, seeing that the attacking party was too strong for him, and fearing famine and capture, he managed that his daughter, with an escort of ten trusty men and an old woman man servant should escape from the castle through an underground passage. She was able to reach England without being captured by her father's enemies, and there she made her home with a distant relative of the Baron, later marrying into an old English family, becoming Lady Winters, wife of the tenth earl of that name."

"Winters!" cried all the listeners, in astonishment, while Lord Winters gave a start of emotion, as he suddenly realized that the hunchback was relating the story of the treasure.

"Yes. It was through the discovery of this fact, while reading the old manuscripts in the castle's library, that I became acquainted with Lord Winters, and through him with you," bowing courteously to his guests.

"But all this doesn't tell us about the ghost," remarked the impatient Duchess, who could not understand what all this past history of a dead and gone baron had to do with the castle's ghost.

"I am coming to him presently, Duchess," answered De Lasouche, with a faintly sneering smile. "It is sometimes necessary to speak of the past that the present may be understood. His daughter in safety, the Baron determined on a direct attack upon the enemy, but one of his men betrayed him before this could be attempted, the enemy entering within the fortified walls. A man-to-man conflict followed, the attacking party made desperately brave by the thought of the treasures of gold and jewels known to be hidden within the castle, and which they hoped to share. Hundreds were slain in this last stand of the Baron, and outnumbered ten to one, he was forced to retreat within the left wing, in which was located the underground passage through which his daughter had previously made her escape, and which was the last hope of the exhausted and defeated warriors.

"The enemy, after vainly trying to break down the massive doors, decided to burn out their vanquished foe, then to finish the slaughter and have full possession of the castle and the treasures it contained. The west wing was therefore set on fire, but contrary to their expectations, not one of the warriors came out, all having escaped unnoticed through the underground passage. The fire was checked in time to save the main part of the castle, the left wing alone being in ruins, in the smothering masses of which Baron de Lasouche and his warriors were supposed to have perishd. In the center of the burned tower, one room had been miraculously preserved—the haunted room you have just seen. How it escaped the destructive work of the flames, no one, either then or since, has been able to explain. It stands and will always stand as a marvel to science and its laws.

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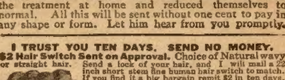

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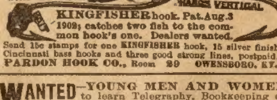

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"Later, in searching for the treasure which was known to be hidden somewhere within the old castle, this room was broken into, and in it was found, not the gold and jewels for which the searchers were looking, but the decomposed and disfigured body of the old Baron de Lasouche, who, miser to the end, had not been able to leave the wealth for which he had sacrificed so many lives; and who, having returned to this room while his supporters were gaining safety, had been smothered to death by the dense smoke coming from the burning tower around and above him."

"Then that was the room where the treasure was concealed!" exclaimed the Duchess, the others fascinated by the odd and weird story not caring to interrupt, though the same thought had come to all.

"That is the supposition which has been handed down from generation to generation, and which has been the cause of so many deaths within its walls. All who ever sought to search for the buried treasure have to this day met with such mysterious deaths as to cause the superstitious to believe that the spirit of the old miser, earthbound to the treasure for which he had sacrificed his life, had protected it, even after death, by killing all who sought to take it from him. It is his cries of agony and his calls for help, while dying in the burning tower, that are supposed to be repeated in the dead of night by his spirit, as a warning to any one who might be tempted to enter the room on which he is destined to keep eternal guard."

"Why, it's an awful story!" cried the Duchess, with a little shiver.

"And you say you have heard the cries and moans" asked Antoinette, who had listened with fascinated interest

"I have heard cries and moans," admitted the Baron, gravely, "but I am not prepared to say they came from the Baron's ghost."

"Yet you said you had no knowledge that they came from human lips."

"Nor have I. Time after time, after hearing the cries, I have gone to the haunted room and found it empty."

"Then what explanation do you give of the phenomonon," asked Sir John, who had ceased to banter, made serious by his interest in the story he had just heard

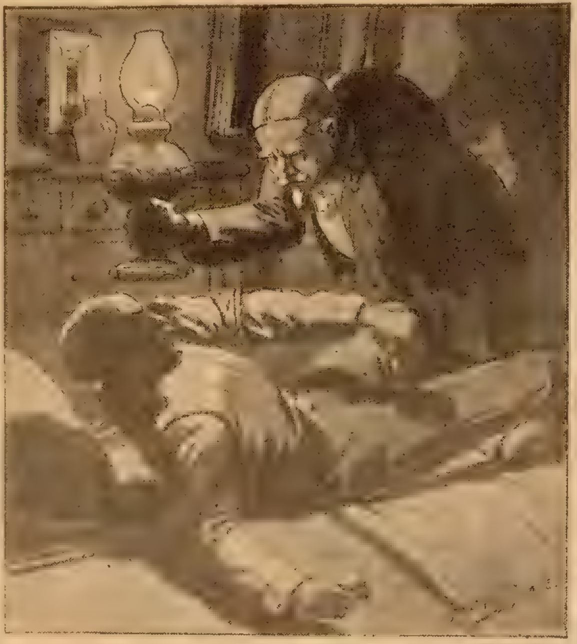
"I can't pretend to give any, it is beyond me. The deaths, however, might be explained, if one reasons out the cause and effect of the whole story."

"How could they?" asked Antoinette, eagerly

"In the first place, it is almost certain that the Baron sent some message to his daughter by his escaping warriors. These warriors, therefore, knew of the existence of the treasure, though not its exact location, and it was natural that they should return to seek it. Baron de Lasouche had thought of this, and in the event of his death, had appointed an old and tried servant to guard it for his daughter, until such time as she was old enough to seek it herself. The servant remained true to his trust, as the deaths which followed the first fifteen years after, the Baron's death proved. This is corroborated by an old manuscript I have found. It was written by the servant before his death, and he admits that he killed a number of his former companions when they sought for the treasure within the haunted room.

"But the record of deaths seems to have continued even after that, from what you have said," objected Lord Winters, who had listened to the story and explanation with breathless interest, his eyes not leaving the hunchback's face.

"Yes, and here is where the reasoning of cause and effect comes in. So many had already died within that room, such awful tales had been handed down from generation to generation, that each year the fear of making the attempt grew greater. To me, the deaths which followed those of the first fifteen years which we know had a normal cause were merely the result of fright on superstitious minds. Greed for gold pushed many to make the attempt, regardless of physical courage. They went there with the thoughts of the past tragedies uppermost in their minds, and the knowledge that so far no one had escaped with his life. Then, some noise, in the dead silence of that room peopled with so many memories, would come to the alert senses, and bring with it death from fright. I am so confident of this, that I have not the least fear of testing my theory tonight, knowing well that I shall not be frightened to death by any mental image, and feeling able to manage any living presence which might try to interfere with my slumbers." This latter remark was made while the Baron gazed at Winters defiantly and significantly



"Look at me!' cried Le Bossu.

Winters did not notice the implied meaning. He was figuring out the probability of the theory advanced by Le Bossu, and as he thought, the conviction grew strong within him that the hunchback had hit upon the correct explanation. This was just what the Baron wanted. Armand and Sir John unknowingly aided him in his plans by admitting that such was the only thing an intelligent modern could possibly think.

A servant coming to announce that dinner would soon be ready, caused the guests to scatter to their rooms to dress, the Duchess saying before she hurried away

"I shall surely not ask for the privilege of sleeping in the haunted room, for I would certainly prove your theory right by dying of fright before morning."

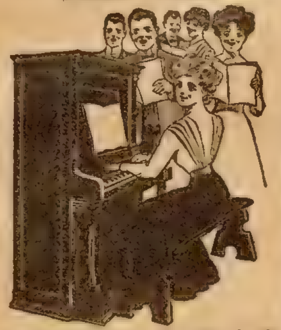
CHAPTER X.

THE NIGHT OF HORROR

During the dinner Winters ate little, but drank much, seeing which Le Bossu smiled. His enemy was doing just what he wished of him, following his mental suggestions as though he held him under a hypnotic sway. It was indeed a hypnotic sway, since it was the sway of gold over a covetous heart. Winters was debating with himself whether to sleep alone in the haunted room, or [illegible] the hunchback's honor, and he sought to drown his fears and misgivings in the fumes of wine. So well did he [illegible] that when dessert was served he startled all by saying to Le Bossu:

"Baron, did I hear you remark that you would give up the haunted room if one of your guests insisted on having it.

(Continued on page fourteen)



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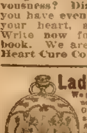

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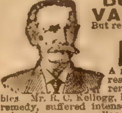

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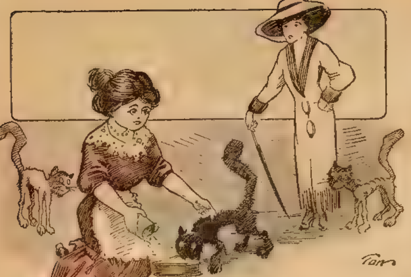


Miss De Oll—How scrawny your cats look don't you feed them enough?
Mrs. Kattery—Well, just now I'm feeding them bird seed to improve their voices

English as She Is Spoke.

French Chauffeur (to deaf farmer on a Maine road)—Can you tell me, sare, vere I get some of se gasoline?

Farmer (with his hand to his ear)—Hey?

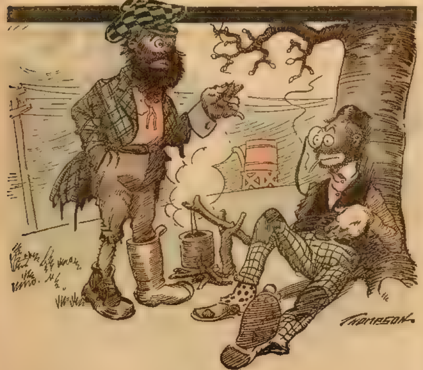
French Chauffeur—Non, non, non! Not ze hay—ze gasoline. Zees eez a motor car, not a horse.

Up-to-date Automobile.

Agent—There is the motor car you want. If anything goes wrong with the mechanism you don't have to crawl under the car to put it right.

Customer—You don't?

Agent—If the slightest thing goes wrong with the machinery the car instantly turns upside down.



First Hobo—Well, I've got my reg'lar spring housecleaning done.
Second Hobo—Your housecleanin'? Gosh! What did you have to do?
First Hobo—Turn my shuck mattress over.

Natural Inference.

Bobby—Mrs. Bjones has a friend who has died and gone to the bad place.

Mamma—Why, Bobby?

Bobby—Well, she said that she had a warm friend who was dead.

Better Still.

Deacon A—What our people need is sermons that will wake them up.

Deacon B—No, brother, what they need is sermons that won't let 'em go to sleep.

An Interesting Speaker.

"You have acted in a decidedly ungentlemanly way, Augustus."

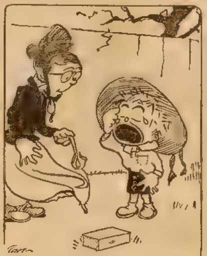
Thus spoke the father of Augustus when he found his son had stolen jam from the larder.

"It may not seem a very great crime to you, Augustus," continued his parent, "but little things lead to big things. The child is 'father to the man,' my boy, and the little petty theft of today may be the great crime of tomorrow. Besides, Augustus, you were disobedient. You were forbidden to take jam, and you took it. Disobedience, Augustus, is the root of all evil. Remember that my boy, and you will rise in the world to cast off the slur of commonplace duplicity."

As his father paused for breath Augustus turned a beaming face to his mother.

Oh, ma!" he exclaimed, 'isn't papa interesting?"

* * *



"Boo-hoo! I put pop's best silk hat over the brick an' somebody's gone an' swiped it!"

He Was Really Fishing.

Friend—Where is your husband?

Hostess—He is off on a trout-fishing trip.

"Oh, yes, I've heard such stories before. How do you know he is really fishing?"

"I have proof He sent me some fish"

"Huh! Fish can be bought in market"

'These weren't. They were such miserable little bits of ones no market would sell them"

The Woman Controls.

"I don't believe in equal suffrage I am opposed to a woman's controlling a vote."

"That's right By the way, why weren't you at the polls the other day? Didn't you want to support the party?"

"Yes, but my wife wouldn't let me.'

Those New England Farms.

"I understand your literary friend owns a farm in New England."

"Yes."

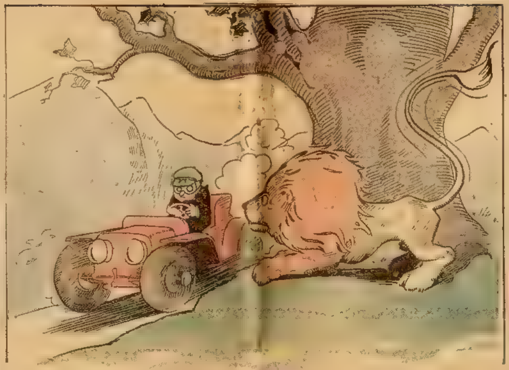
"Did he clear it?"

"Why, there was nothing on it but the mortgage."

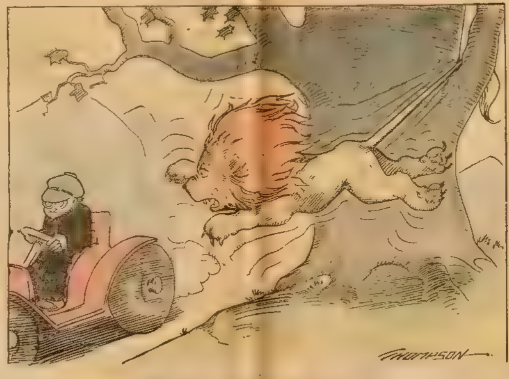
Not a Great Worker.

At one time a visitor to a municipal office politely inquired concerning a veteran employe, "Does Mr. G—— work here?" To his surprise came the answer, "No, but he's here!"

TALE OF A LION.



"Aha! My meat!" the lion cried,
And waved his tail in feline glee.



He sprang, but missed his quarry wide.
His tail had caught in the crotch of a tree.

Essential.

"You don't claim to be a party leader?"

"No," replied the quiet citizen. "Everybody wants to be the leader of the party. It strikes me that somebody ought to be willing to be the party."

Tommy—Dad, what is meant by the mother-tongue?

Pa—S-sh, my boy! Don't start her!

Brain Work.

"Does your husband help you much around the house?" asked the neighbor.

"Well," replied the tired-looking woman, "Josiah's work is mostly brain work. He keeps right busy thinkin' up ways for me to economize."

Not the General's Cow.

The commanding officer of a military station desiring that the growing grass around the quarters be offered every protection, gave strict orders to the sentries that only his cow should be allowed to go over it.

One day the general's wife, while calling upon a certain officer's wife, wished to make a short cut by walking over the grass from one path to another.

"No one to pass here, madam," said the sentry.

The lady drew herself up. "Do you know who I am?" she demanded.

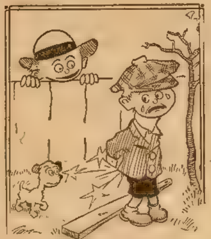
"No, madam," replied the impassive sentry, "I do not know who you are, but I do know that you are not the general's cow, and no one but the cow is allowed to walk on this grass."

The Forgetful Man.

Knicker—What did he remember on the witness stand?

Bocker—Absolutely nothing; not even a winter just like this, only colder

* * *



"Did you ever fool anybody, Willie?
"Yep. I fooled myself outo' thinkin I could fool pa"

Neither.

George Eastman, the inventor of the kodak, is responsible for this story:

"I was sitting in a drug store, waiting to get a prescription filled, when a young Irishman entered. He pointed to a stack of green castile soap, and said:

"'Oi want a loomp o' thot.'

"'Very well, sir,' said the clerk. "Will you have it scented or unscented?'

"'Oi'll take ut with me," said the Irishman

A Bright Boy.

"Want a situation as an errand boy, do you? Well, can you tell me how far the moon is from the earth, eh?"

'Well, guv'nor, I don't know; but I reckon it ain't close enough to interfere with me running errands."

He got the job.

In Which Sense, Maudie?

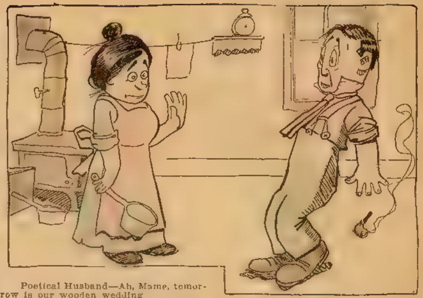
Alice—It's mean of you to tell people that when Jack kissed me I didn't resent it

Maud—I didn't, dear. On the contrary, I said that when he kissed you on the cheek, you held it up against him for quite awhile.

What Impressed Him Most.

"So you got the opinion of two lawyers on the case. Were their opinions the same?"

"Yes, $25 each.



Poetical Husband—Ah, Mame, tomorrow is our wooden wedding

Practical Wife—I know it, Hank. I ordered a load of kindling, come home early and carry it into the cellar.

Horse versus Motor.

"You will stick to that old 10 year-old nag of yours I see, Blithers" said Dubbleigh "Why don't you get a motor?"

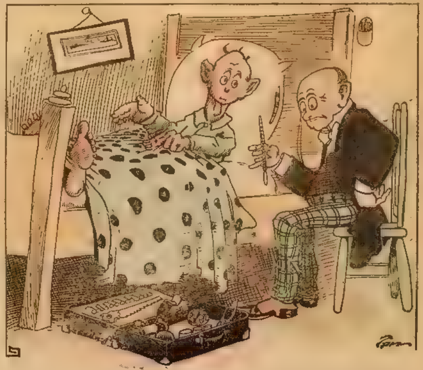
"Well," said Blithers. "I've sort of found that there is more style to a 1902 model horse than there is to a 1902 model car."

Use Vaccine.

'I say, mamma' said little Tommy, 'is it true that when you first met papa you had fallen into the water and he jumped in and saved you?"

"Quite true, my dear," replied mamma, with a smile.

"Then, I wonder if that's why papa won't allow me to learn to swim?"



The Doctor—You seem to have some internal disturbance. What did you eat for supper last night?
The Patient—Hot dog and a welsh rabbit.
The Doctor—That accounts for it. They're having a coursing match inside of you.

Couldn't Go.

"I was tempted to go home to mother."

"Why didn't you?"

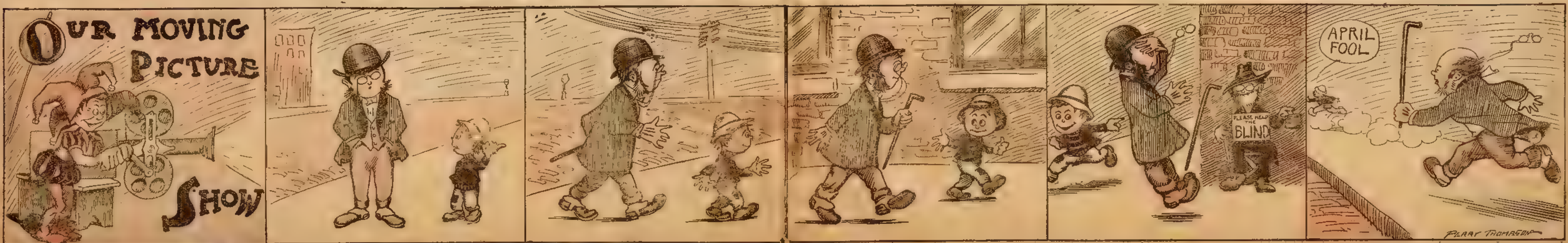
"Well, after quarreling with him, I wasn't going to ask my husband to button my gown."

Not Unlikely.

Mr. Jimson—What? Is Bilson going to get married? He told me positively he would never marry again.

Mrs. Jimson (calmly)—I presume you asked him on the way to the funeral.

AN APRIL FOOL JOKE.



Bobby—Say. Mister, I know a feller down here that would give fifty dollars to see you.

Mr. Featherbrane—Mercy, who can it be? Maybe he wishes to give me a high salaried position.

Bobby—I expect so. He is just around the corner here a piece, mister.

Bobby—Dere he is. Mebbe he'd give more than fifty if he could see you!

Mr. Featherbrane—I shall certainly chastise this young person severely, if I catch him!

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The Baron's Revenge.

(Continued from page eleven.)

"Yes," replied the hunchback, lowering his eyes that no one might see the sudden light of triumph he felt was flashing through them.

"Then, Baron, I insist on having that room. I feel in just the right mood to see spirits."

"You don't mean that you want to sleep in the haunted room!" cried the Duchess in astonishment, while a look of surprise appeared on Antoinette's face.

"I do," asserted Winters, more boldly, as he drained in one draught another glass of wine. "I am anxious to prove to myself and by myself the truth of the legend recountered about the castle's ghost. I want to see what he would do to a modern skeptic who does not believe in spirits.

"Except the spirits of wine!" remarked Sir John, with assumed gravity, which caused a general outburst of laughter.

"Exactly," replied Winters, extending his glass for more wine. "And I am proving it. Baron, your wine is so good that it would be the height of folly not to believe in it."

While Winters was being served anew, Maintland remarked, in an aside to the Duchess, by whose side he was seated:

"If he keeps on at that rate, he'll have enough 'spirits' in him to make him see the other kind, even if there are none to be seen."

"He shouldn't be allowed to go while in that condition," answered Renee, in the same low tone, as she looked at Lord Winters' flushed face and blinking eyes.

"Easier said than done," retorted Sir John. "Winters is as mulish as the devil when he wants to do anything."

"Still, it would not be safe for him to spend the night alone in the haunted room, supposing there was some real danger to be faced."

Maintland laughed. "To tell the truth, I don't think there is any danger. Every old castle has similar tales told in connection with its early history."

While this conversation was taking place between Maintland and the Duchess, the Baron was answering Winters. Armand and Antoinette, listening to his answer, did not hear the low conversation between the other two.

"Do you really wish to spend the night in the haunted room?" asked the Baron, having once more regained full control over himself, and being now able to look Winters full in the eye without betraying his inward joy.

"I most certainly do," Winters had answered. "I don't think it just that you, as host, should have the most interesting room in the castle."

"In that case, my lord, the haunted room is yours; but I wish it all understood that I in no way thrust it upon any of my guests. It is Lord Winters' expressed wish to spend the night within its walls. If he has any unpleasant experience tonight he will have no one to blame but himself."

"Do you think he will have any?" asked Antoinette, timidly, somewhat anxious, in spite of herself, that her relative, in his present state, should sleep alone in the deserted wing.

"No, since I intended to sleep there myself. I say this so that my hospitality be not doubted, should I be mistaken and my surmise not be correct," answered the hunchback.

If Antoinette was more anxious, Armand felt relieved. A vague fear had oppressed him since his father had stated his intention of sleeping alone in the ruined and deserted wing, far from the rest of the castle, in that room of tragic past.

Dessert finished, host and guests went out on the terrace to enjoy their coffee and cigars. Again Winters drank more freely than the others of the cordials served. When toward ten o'clock, the ladies, wearied by the long ride of the morning, arose to retire. Winters was very unsteady on his legs, his tongue was thick, and he talked much and boastingly. Seeing this Antoinette drew her brother aside, saying to him:

"John, do try to make Lord Winters change his mind about sleeping alone. I am afraid something will happen to him if he does, and I will not be able to sleep myself.

"I can try," replied Sir John, "though, mark my word, he's too drunk to listen to any reasoning." Going to Winters, he said: "Cousin Winters, if you take my advice, you will wait until tomorrow night before attempting to see the castle's ghost face to face."

Winters looked at Maintland hesitatingly. Now that the moment had come, he was uneasy, in spite of his half-intoxicated condition. Le Bossu saw the hesitation, and quick to act, knowing that the more eager he would seem to keep the room for himself, the more Winters would want it, he said, advancing to join Sir John and Lord Winters:

"I believe Sir Maintland is right, my lord. Let us try out the ghost tonight; then, if nothing happens to me, you can try for yourself tomorrow night."

The hunchback's ruse worked, as he knew it would. Winters cast a suspicious look at him from his bloodshot eyes, and trying to steady his swaying form, he replied:

"I will not hear of it, Baron. To me alone must be given the credit of finding the castle's ghost, if ghost there be. Please call a servant to light the way."

"I don't think any servant would be willing to go," answered the hunchback. "But if you permit me, I will act as light bearer."

"Come with us as far as the door, Maintland," requested Winters, fearing to trust himself alone with the hunchback along the dark passages. "You will keep the Baron company coming back, after I am safely settled in my new quarters." Then, to the ladies and Armand he added with a jaunty indifference he was far from feeling: "Will see you tomorrow and tell you all about the ghost. Good night."

After Maintland and the Baron had seen that Winters was comfortable for the night, with a bright fire in the grate, the large room being cold and damp, and a lamp burning brightly on the table, they left him and returned to the others, who were awaiting their return on the terrace.

"Well?" asked the Duchess, anxiously.

"He has locked himself in the room," replied the hunchback. "We made him as comfortable as possible before leaving him."

"I think it is madness for him to sleep there alone," remarked Antoinette, "after that uncanny story told us this afternoon, it seems to be the poorest place one could select for enjoying a night's rest."

"Have no fear," smiled her brother. "Winters has taken care of that. He has drunk enough to insure his sleeping anywhere."

When Winters found himself alone in the haunted room, a sudden terror came over him. He made toward the door to call Maintland and the Baron back. Then the fear of ridicule, as well as that of the possible loss of the treasure, stopped him. He had gone too far to retreat; he must face it out, no matter what happened. He drew a chair near the fire and sat down, determined not to sleep, but the combined influence of the heat and the liquor he had drunk overcame his resolution, and he fell almost immediately into a drunken slumber, which practically amounted to a torper, forgetting both ghost and treasure in this complete paralysis of his senses.

An hour later the shutters of one of the side windows were softly opened. Then a man crept into the room through the open window, which Winters had not lowered. The man paused, listening. Winters' heavy breathing, coming to him in the silence of the room, reassured him, and he crept nearer the sleeper. The combined light of the fire and the lamp lit up the flushed and swollen face. It was easy to see that the man was in a drunken torper, from which no ordinary sound could arouse him. An evil smile curled the newcomer's lips, as slowly and with the greatest care he drew both chair and sleeper away from the fire to the bed. Winters slept on. Then, with a strength one would never have thought concealed in the deformed and twisted form, Le Bossu—for it was he—lifted Winters to the bed, where he laid him, still sleeping, a pitiful mass of human flesh from which drink had taken both strength and intelligence. Winters stirred slightly when being placed upon the bed, but his eyes did not open, and the heavy breathing continued. The hunchback waited a moment to see if he would awaken, then he pulled the chair back to its place by the fire and arranged the rugs which had been disturbed. He then went to a small desk, which he opened, drawing out a coil of rope. With this he returned to the bed, and rapidly, but with the greatest caution, he bound the sleeper securely to the solid posts, so that struggle as he might, Winters could not break away. This done, Le Bossu burst into an inhuman laugh of fiendish triumph, as he cried aloud in the excess of his joy:

"Now he is mine! Nereje, you will soon be avenged!"

Shaking the sleeper rudely, he ordered in loud tones, uttered almost in his ear. "Awake now and look at me!"

Winters opened his eyes, startled. The hunchback was leering at him, his face almost touching his, his hot, gasping breath fanning the terrified man's cheek. In an instant the fumes of drink cleared from Winters' brain, fright sobering him at once. He tried to leap to his feet and reach for the gun that he knew was in his hip pocket, but he found himself powerless. Hoarsely, in a voice which scarcely had a human accent, he asked:

"What do you want?"

"Vengeance!" hissed the hunchback.

"Vengeance? What have I done to you?" The words came with difficulty from the throat contracted by fear.

"Look at me!" cried Le Bossu, taking up the lamp and bringing it close to his face that it might better light his features. "Look and see if you do not recognize me."

Fascinated by an ever-increasing terror, Winters looked at the awful face above him. He seemed to recall in a dim way those features which he closely examined for the first time, yet he was unable to connect them with any one event of the past. The hunchback saw this, and said:

"You don't remember. Well, I will tell you. I am Jean de Ravelle, husband of Lydia Winters, known as Nereje, whom you betrayed into the hands of the Radips worshipers, causing her death and my deformity."

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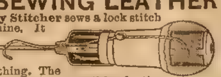

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A cry of boundless terror died in Winters' throat. His eyes became wild and his face a ghostly white, as the blood rushed back to his heart in a rapid flow, leaving him gasping for breath.

Le Bossu continued: "That is why I hate you. That is why all these years I have pursued you with a slow but relentless vengeance; which will only end with your death."

Winters tried to speak, but terror had paralyzed his vocal organs, and the Baron de Lasouche continued:

"It was through me that your young wife was taken from you in that tragic manner. It was I who saw to it that the son you worshiped was drowned. It was I, again, who, little by little, took from you the wealth for which you had sacrificed the innocent Nereje, and now tonight it shall be I who will take your life in a manner befitting your crime of the past."

"Mercy!" framed Winters' colorless lips, as fascinated and spellbound he gazed upon the hunchback's face, still so close to his that it seemed as though the glaring eyes were burning his very soul with their glimmer of overpowering hate.

Le Bossu laughed at this whispered appeal of his victim, and straightened himself as much as his deformity would allot, he replied:

"You had no mercy when you betrayed the innocent Nereje into the hands of those whom you knew would subject her to tortures such as only savage brains can invent. As you did so shall you be done by. As she died, so shall you die, bled to death by one of the spiders that drained her life's blood, and which I have kept all these years for that very purpose."

"The spider!" The sudden horror that word carried to Winters' heart brought back to him his vanishing strength, and scream after scream tore his throat, as he struggled madly to break the bonds which held him a prisoner.

The hunchback heeded neither the one nor the other, for he knew that even should the victim's cries be heard by the other guests, they would think it was the castle's ghost. As to the cords, he was sure of their strength, and feared not the struggles of the terror-maddened man. Going back to the desk from which he had taken the rope, he took out a queer-looking box filled with holes—the same box that the inhabitants of F—— had seen him carry when he came to the castle fifteen years before

With this in his hands, he walked back to the bed, Winters watching him with eyes which nearly stared out of his head. Slowly, deliberately, enjoying the lengthening of the victim's agony, he opened the box and shook out its grewsome occupant on the bed, saying as he did so:

"Here is the treasure of the haunted room, a treasure of revenge to the one you injured beyond pardon."

The huge spider remained motionless for a time, blinking at the sudden light; then, hungry, not having been fed for days, it smelled the living flesh so near at hand, and slowly began creeping up toward the victim's throat. Exhausted, almost dead with horror and fright, Winters had ceased calling for help, knowing that none would come, and watched with fascinated eyes the crawling death which was creeping up to his throat. The hunchback, with folded arms, watched also—a stern judge and executioner, carrying out a sentence of death.

The big spider finally reached the soft throat and buried its fangs in the flesh, causing Winters to utter one last piercing cry, which echoed dismally throughout the entire castle. Then he lay still He had either died or fainted from fright.

Le Bossu waited a few minutes, then cut the cords which held the victim, throwing them and the box which had contained the spider into the fire, and watched until they were burned. Then, having seen that the bed was in perfect order, with no indication of the struggle which had taken place, he put out the light, leaving the rom by the same way he had come. The spider remained alone and undisturbed to enjoy its feast.

The conclusion of this remarkable story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year, and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

* * *

McMaster, the Man.

(Continued from page four.)

away. "I am a man," he said to himself, "and I will watch this thing out like a man."

As he sat and waited, his imagination conjured up the form of his lost Felicidad—the very feeling of her hand on his arm and the ecstacy of her presence near him—her fair white forehead, her soulful eyes, the starlike purity of her classic face—all these he saw as clearly as if she had been standing before him.

But the mist did not clear away, and all day long McMaster waited, listening for the sound of bells, or for the return of his dog that had now been gone for two days. The fog drenched his clothing and cut off the view on every side, closing him in like a prison wall. Down below he knew there was a steady downpour. The cliff he sat on bristled with electricity. Momentarily the swirling cloudwrack was shot through with flashes of dazzling fire, and the granite crags laughed and shouted to each other like things of life. It was bizarre, colossal, terrifying. McMaster's senses swam with the swirling of the cloudwrack, and a sort of darkness seemed gathering about him at times, although he knew it was not night. Through the noises of the storm he could hear the continuous and clamorous ringing of a church bell. It was maddening. Why didn't old Justino have it stopped? It was wrong to begin tolling the bells for a man before the breath was out of his body, but these Mexicans would do anything. Why would no one ever come and collect his bones? He wanted Christian burial, and here his bones had lain for years and years. It was shameful! While all these crazy fancies ran through the poor man's brain, the ledge he lay on pushed itself off into the mist and went sailing away like a ship before a wind. And now there was somebody up in the rigging calling to him: "Come aloft, McMaster! Come up! come up!"

His answering "Ay, ay, sir," was so loud that it startled him completely out of his delirium. Then he heard a voice that certainly was not imaginary: "Senor McMaster, if you are in your right mind, fasten this rope about you and let us pull you up."

By a supreme effort the half-demented McMaster pulled himself together.

"Is that you, Senor Justino?" he called back, in a voice that sounded strange even to him. "Wait a minute till I get this rope knotted about me." Then, after a moment's delay, "All right, hoist away!"

He fainted twice while they were pulling him up. Later—he did not know how much later—he felt the brandy being forced between his teeth, and heard a voice which he know to be Villalon's.

"Senor Justino," the voice was saying, "let live and I will never show my face in Sonora again. Those two lying slaves told me that McMaster deserted them and went away with a party of American tourists.'

The young engineer tried to rise and tell his enemy how basely he was lying, but when he got upon his elbow he saw the back of the retreating figure, already far down the mountain trail.

"Who found me?" he gasped, looking about at the friendly faces. "And what day is this? She didn't marry him, did she?"

"You may thank my little Felicidad for being found," replied the proud father. "She saw your dog acting very strangely and refused to marry that ruffian, Villalon, until we had followed the dog and made a thorough search for you 'What day is this?' It is Saturday, and tomorrow, if you are well, you and Felicidad shall have your wish and be married. The church is all ready. And, by the way, here is a note she said to hand to you in case we found you."

McMaster's eyes devoured the note eagerly. It read:

"Dear Senor McMaster: I had changed my name to Dolores, but if you are found and return to me, it shall be again Felicidad; for I shall be the happiest girl in Mexico."

Next week's Ledger will contain another Out West Story, entitled "Ben Plevin's Wife." It is strong and interesting. Read it.

* * *

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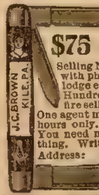

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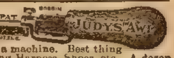

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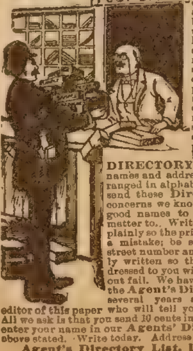

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Untangling the Threads.

(Continued from page eight.)

some interest involved. Nor would a man carry tales that would result in another's being injured unless he had some motive for such an action: Collins, angered by what Wilson told him, went directly to Stone's cell and thrashed him, after which he returned to his own room.

As Wilson had evidently hoped, Collins, in his frenzy, forgot to lock the cell door upon leaving. In his statements to me Collins could not swear that he had even closed the door. He confessed to having been excited, but felt that the habits of his duty were so instilled in him that he must have instinctively locked Stone's cell. However, in my deduction, I claim the negative. Wilson had not carried out his plans immediately after my client's departure, because Jones, the turnkey, had seen Stone after his beating. The fact that none of the prisoners were awakened during the night proved to me that Wilson had waited until Stone had gone to sleep. Examination of the door showed me that it could have easily been unlocked without Jones detecting it. This was very important to my line of reasoning.

After killing Stone, Wilson naturally figured on his escape. To have run away would have been equivalent to a confession. Wilson covered his tracks in a more clever fashion. He had himself discharged, and he chose, to my mind, a very crude method. In his case, however, it accomplished his purpose, for even Collins did not suspect Wilson of being the guilty man. As Collins had informed me, in answer to my sharp questioning, the chief warden had discovered Wilson in his private office, boldly using official stationery. Rebuked, Wilson had replied sharply, a clash of words ensued, resulting in Wilson's discharge. In this manner he made good his escape without the slightest suspicion of crime being attached to his name

If Collins did not kill Stone, then Wilson did, and at ten o'clock the next morning Collins was to be hanged. Could I find Wilson? The attorneys had failed to produce him for the trial, and yet I had strong reasons to expect success. However, to guard against a calamity, and such would be the death of an innocent man, I communicated with my client's attorneys, told them of my theories, and requested them to appeal to some court for a stay of sentence. They informed me that this would be a doubtful course, as the State would strongly oppose such an action. This was at four o'clock.

I shuddered to think of what Collins' condition must be. The day before he had failed to recognize me. The officials informed me that he had not partaken of food for a week, and they did not seem able to persuade him to taste of even the slighest diet. Afraid of the gallows, he evidently preferred starvation.

At five o'clock I went up to the office of a friend of mine in the Ashland Block. He had generously offered it for my use. On my arrival, I found the warden of Joliet penitentiary, the State's attorney, two plain clothes men, Mr. Nelson, and the editor of my paper, all present at my invitation. I showed them into one of the private offices and after they were all comfortably seated, I informed them of my deductions, which fastened the guilt of Stone's murder upon Wilson. The State's attorney laughed heartily at my story, while the warden commented sarcastically upon a crazy reporter, who evidently thought he had nothing to do but to come from Joliet to Chicago to hear such a fool tale. Mr. Nelson sat silent, puzzled as to why I had requested his presence. My editor refrained from voicing any opinion.

"Could you identify this fellow Wilson?" I asked the offended warden.

"I ought to be able to," he replied. "I mighty near thrashed him once."

A knock upon the door interrupted my next question. In answer to my response, my friend's stenographer entered.

"A gentleman to see Mr. Burns," she said. "Is he here?"

"Send the gentleman in," I replied, turning my chair so as to face the door. The climax to all of my efforts was about to be reached. Either my conclusions were to be proved entirely accurate, or else, in this case, I had completely failed and Collins, guilty or innocent, would hang. I could tell by the serious expressions of those around me that my attitude had given them cause to expect some important surprise. The State's attorney was clearly worried, while the warden made no attempt to conceal his anxiety. Mr. Nelson sat placid, not yet in the least comprehensive of his connection with the meeting. My editor seemed hopeful of some startling occurrence. At my request the two officers arose and stood at either side of the door. A young man slowly entered the room.

"Wilson!" exclaimed the warden.

"Thompson!" corrected Mr. Nelson.

"Both!" I cried, my voice vibrating with the exultation I felt over my success. The young man started at seeing the warden, stared wildly at all of us; then, as if panic-stricken, started for the door. The officers took hold of him, and after a short struggle he sank into a chair and wept bitterly as the handcuffs were fastened. I glanced quickly around at my visitors, and was pleased to note that my stroke had triumphed. The warden was ignorant of Wilson's dual identity, but the State's attorney immediately recalled Thompson, although he, in his turn, was unaware of Thompson's dual character

I briefly told them the facts. Mr. Nelson served his purpose when he identified his deceased daughter's lover; when I had summoned him, I was not sure that the State's attorney would remember Thompson. I asked our prisoner if he had anything to say, and after a momentary pause he arose and crossed to the center of the room. I leaned back in my chair, lighted my cigar, and prepared to listen to his story. And here let me confess that I felt keenly for the poor creature whom duty had made my prisoner.

"I killed Peter Stone!" Thompson's voice was hoarse, and he spoke with considerable effort. "And I am glad. You gentlemen probably know just how I succeeded in obtaining my revenge. At first, when he was being tried, I had no thought of committing murder. I trusted

(Continued on page seventeen.)

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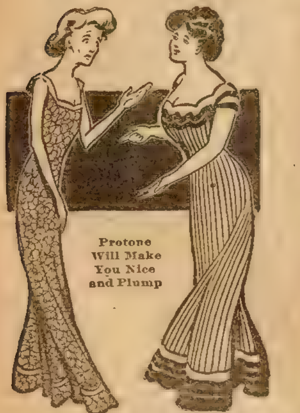
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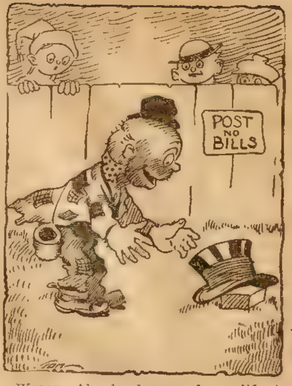


Weary—Ah, de dream of me life to have a high silk hat is at last realized."

❧ ❧ ❧

Mark Twain.

"Clemens was a funnier man to know than to read," said Major Forrest of Hartford. "It was my privilege to play whist and billiards with him occasionally, and the total unexpectedness of the things he could do and say was infinitely better than any of the humor he gave to type. Here's an instance of what I mean:

"His home—the old one, the one that was burned—backed up to the little place where Harriet Beecher Stowe spent her last years, and Mark used now and then to clamber over the fence and chat for a while with the old lady, especially in the warm days when she was sunning herself on the piazza.

"After one of these visits, as he was re-entering his house, Mrs. Clemens met him with: 'Gracious! Sam, surely you've not been over to see Mrs. Stowe without your collar and necktie on! She'll think you don't own any.' Within half an hour one of the Clemens girls had carried a little box around to Mrs. Stowe, and in it the literary parent of 'Uncle Tom' found a collar and tie with the brief note: 'Just that you can see I have some.'

"Another time, as Mrs. Clemens herself once told me, when Mark had gone to Washington for New Year's Day and was to attend the White House reception (it was during Cleveland's administration), he presented to Mrs. Cleveland, when he came to her in 'the line,' a card on which he had scrawled in pencil, 'He didn't.' 'Will you please sign it, Mrs. Cleveland?' said he, smilingly, and wonderingly she did so. 'Now, I'll tell you why,' he continued; 'my wife assured me before I left home that she was positive I'd forget my galoshes and wear them in here, and I just wanted to prove to her that I didn't.'"

❧ ❧ ❧

The President Laughed.

President Taft, who has difficulty in keeping his weight down to 300 pounds, often cracks a joke or gets off a witticism about his size. One afternoon, as he was leaving the White House to take a horseback ride, he met a group of newspaper correspondents, and among them was Matthew Tighe, an old friend.

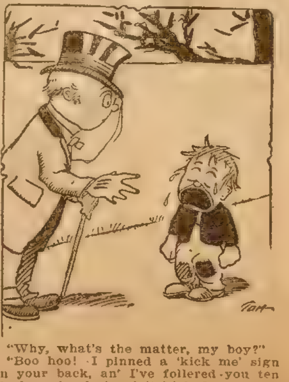
After greetings had been exchanged, Mr. Taft looked down at his legs encased in leggings which emphasized the girth of the limbs. He struck his left leg a resounding blow with his riding-crop, and turning to Tighe, asked with a smile:

"What do you think of that, Matt?"

"That," said Tighe, grinning, "would do credit to any piano ever manufactured."

And the loudest laugh about it came from the President.

❧ ❧ ❧



"Why, what's the matter, my boy?"

"Boo hoo! I pinned a 'kick me' sign on your back, an' I've follered you ten blocks an' nobody ain't kicked you yet."

(Continued from page sixteen.)

to the State to exact ample vengeance, but the jury failed in its duty. The brute was not condemned to the gallows but was allowed to live. Think of it! He, who had taken her life, was to live! I determined to act. You see, I had seen her; I saw the bruises upon her pretty face, where he had beaten her; the fingerprints upon her bare white neck, where he had choked her, and the bullet wound, where he had—good God! You do not blame me, do you? I loved her!"

And he looked defiantly around at all of us. He was really handsome as he drew himself up to his full height and boldly justified his crime.

"I made up my mind to do what the State had failed to do," he continued. "I would kill Peter Stone. Upon the pretense of going abroad, I went to Joliet, secured a position in the prison, and by a stroke of good fortune, was placed on duty near Stone. At any time I could have shot my intended victim, but I wanted to get into his cell, to beat him, to feel my hands on him. I discovered that it would take me some time to become a turnkey. I noted the enmity Collins bore Stone, and so I—but I suppose you know the rest."

Thompson addressed this last to me. I informed him that I was well aware of his actions. In a few words I related the deductions which had resulted in my correct conclusion.

First, I had sought the one possessing a motive to slay Stone; Thompson, who had loved Stone's victim, immediately became a likely clew. Upon investigation, I found that Thompson had left town after Stone's trial; the time covering his journey was of the same duration as Wilson's employment at Joliet. The connection presented itself, and following this line of reasoning, I caught my man. To Thompson's credit, be it stated, he really did not know that Collins had been convicted for his crime.

"When I found this out," he said, after I had finished, "I wrote out a full confession and sent it to the State's attorney. Then I received the note from Mr. Burns, requesting me to call in regard to a matter of business."

"The name is fictitious," I informed him.

"Did I understand you to say that you sent me a confession?" asked the State's attorney

Thompson did not reply, for at that moment the office door was suddenly flung open to admit a Mr. Jerome, one of the State's attorney's assistants. He crossed the room quickly to give a letter to his superior, and as the prosecutor tore open the envelope, I realized that it was Thompson's confession

"This will make it easier for you," I heard him say to Thompson, as I arose to leave the office. My editor had departed immediately after hearing my full story, but the smile he gave me, when leaving, bore every promise of another raise in salary. As I left the room, poor Mr. Nelson, his nerves almost shattered by the excitement of the meeting, was sobbing upon Thompson's shoulders.

Once outside, I made directly for the county jail. Upon reaching my client's cell I perceived him crouched in a far corner of his dismal quarters. His eyes, staring out of the semi-darkness, appeared like the glaring optics of some wild beast. I called to him, but, overcome by fear, exhaustion, and hysteria, he did not heed me. Indeed, he tried to crawl farther from me.

"I did not kill Peter Stone!" he was muttering madly. "I did not kill Peter Stone!" And, poor fellow, he really had not.

* * *

TRUE LOVE.

"I don't want to be harsh, Gwendolen," said Trenody, addressing his beautiful daughter, "but I want it understood right now that you must cease receiving the attentions of young Mayspeeker. He is a cheap skate in every sense of the word, and I simply won't stand for him as a son-in-law. It passes my comprehension how you can favor an aleck like him, when John Hammerclaw is suffering to make you his bride."

"But I don't love Mr. Hammerclaw," protested the lovely girl. "He's a most disagreeable young man. He smokes a strong pipe and he really ought to be fumigated before he calls upon a lady."

"That's a woman's way of looking at it. Because Hammerclaw smokes you are prepared to turn him down and give encouragement to a Willie boy like Mayspeeker who would become giddy if he chewed a stick of gum. Let me tell you, my girl, that you'll be in luck if the man you marry has no worse habit than smoking. Some of the greatest men in history were inveterate smokers. Sir Walter Raleigh, Shakespeare, Tennyson, George Eliot, and a hundred more great and good men smoked pipes

"But this is all beside the question. Hammerclaw is a young man with a future. He has the finest business instinct I ever saw, and there's no saying where he will land. Along with Carnegie and Rockefeller, perhaps. He came into this town without a dollar and now he owns his business and has money in the bank."

"Yes, but he stammers frightfully. It takes him ten minutes to say 'good evening.'"

"Well, what of it? A woman does all the talking, anyhow, when she's married, so there's no sense in having a silver tongued orator for a husband. You could marry a phonograph if talk is what you want. But a woman wants more than oratory. She wants to be supported in comfort, if not luxury, and in order to make that a sure thing she must marry a man who has a head on him, and you'll hunt a long time before you find a better head than Hammerclaw's. Why, that young man is respected and admired by every banker and financier in town."

"But he's about a foot shorter than I am, and if there's anything ridiculous in this world it is a husband who has to stand on a chair to see if his wife has her hat on straight. No, pa, I wouldn't consider marrying Mr. Hammerclaw. I don't care how good a business man he is, or what the bankers and financiers say of him—I don't like him."

"But he worships the ground you walk on, Gwendolen," said the parent, desperately.

"So does Charlie Mayspeeker, and he's a man any woman would be proud of. He has the most beautiful hair and eyes!"

"Oh, hang his hair and eyes! Lots of good they'll do you if you marry him and find that he can't pay your millinery and dry goods bills. A husband whose credit is good at the stores can afford to stutter and be less than five feet high, but a man who can't make a decent living can't realize anything on his good looks. I reckon Mayspeeker never had a $10 bill of his own since he was born, and yet you talk of marrying his hair and eyes!"

"You've been away from home for a month, pa, and so you haven't heard the news. Charlie's rich uncle died two weeks ago and left him a fortune."

"Well, bless my eyes! I've heard that Charlie had expectations in that direction, but I thought it was all hot air. I'm glad to hear it, indeed. He's a fine young fellow, is Mayspeeker, and I've always had a great deal of confidence in him. Far be it from me to interfere with the course of true love when a daughter of mine anchors her affections to such a worthy and estimable young man.

"I was merely testing the strength of your love when I urged you to marry Hammerclaw. He is no mate for my beautiful girl. I want no sideshow attraction like him for a son-in-law. So Charlie has inherited a fortune! I always felt that he would forge to the front if he had any kind of an opportunity."

* * *

It is called flattery when other people tell us the nice things we have always thought about ourselves.

Rising to the Occasion.

It was late before Pumperton got home, but his wife was still sitting up for him. "Well, John," she greeted him, "how was the dinner? And how was your speech received?"

Pumperton took off his coat, smiling genially. "Oh, splendidly, my dear, splendidly! I got there a bit late, when the others were at the table, but I just slipped in quietly and didn't make any stir."

"Well, how about the speech?" she reminded him. "Did it make as much of a hit as you expected?"

"Oh, yes—more. None of the preceding speeches had been particularly clever, and they had hardly raised a smile. But I had no more than stood up and begun when they began to laugh. I went on, my dear, and, I assure you, they simply shook. I never have seen any company so thoroughly entertained. I even expanded a little—gave them a couple of new stories that came into my mind. And when I sat down they cheered and clapped and laughed for minutes. I shall never forget how they laughed."

"Yes, I can well imagine so," his wife said sarcastically. "But the next time you are to make an after-dinner speech wouldn't it be well to put your vest on before leaving home?

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Published Every Saturday
By W. D. BOYCE CO., CHICAGO, ILL.
500 Dearborn Avenue.

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Fortune favors the brave who hustle.

But he laughs best who doesn't have the laugh on him.

Be charitable; you may be up against it yourself some day.

The good die young. This applies especially to resolutions.

Some men really look upon public office as a private trust.

The less some people are able to annoy you the less they like it.

Time is a wound healer, but it's no good as a wrinkle remover.

Girls should take the remarks of a fresh young man with a grain of salt.

Men have no idea what funny ideas women harbor until they get married.

There is more or less hypocrisy in the smile a man generates when he loses.

Everybody will be happy and content—when sheep begin to grow feathers.

The average man has to sprint occasionally in order to keep up with his running expenses.

Some people are unable to collect their thoughts—probably because they have none coming to them.

Even if it were possible to cremate the family skeleton a woman would need just as many closets.

Nothing arouses a woman's fighting spirit like a flirtatious husband—unless he belongs to some other woman.

A man who flatters a woman during courtship will sidetrack a lot of trouble if he keeps it up after marriage.

When you read of a young man having accepted a situation, it means that he has hustled around and found a job.

It's the contrariness of her own sex that induces a woman to agree with a man just when he doesn't want her to.

The fact that a mule didn't know any better than to kick you doesn't add to the enjoyment of your stay in the hospital.

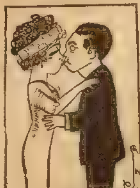
The majority of us would have to work twenty-four hours a day if we were to love our neighbors as they love themselves.

A man may be able to convince an innocent maid that he loves her more than he loves himself, but he can't convince a widow.

Breathes there a man with soul so dead, who never to himself has said: "How much easier I could bear my neighbor's burden than my own!"

ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

A Noble Girl.



"Jim stole a kiss from me this evening, mama," confessed the girl.

"The wretch!" cried mama. "Well, what did you do?"

"I shrieked—I scratched his face—I was terribly angry. But he asked to be heard, and I listened to what he had to say. Well, he said he stole it only that he might give it to a poor girl who never had any kisses. I could not help seeing how noble he was and so—"

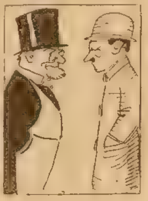
"And so you let him go with a cheap excuse like that?"

Oh, no. I gave him several others to take to the poor thing."

Not Repeating Remarks.

A slight accident had happened in repairing the tracks, and Murphy was sent to the office to report it. He was handed a blank to fill out, and got along all right till he came to the section headed "Remarks." "If you please, sorr," he said beckoning to the clerk. "What's the trouble, Murphy?" he was asked. "Well, y' see sorr, it was Bill's big toe he crushed wid the hammer, an' Oi'd just as soon not put down the raymarks Bill made."

Their Coming Out.



Jones had had a leg up in the world and was mighty proud of his new position. Not long since he met a man who in his submerged days had been his chum, but who had remained in the old rut.

"Hello. Brown!" said Jones, smirking at his friend. 'You haven't been to see my new house yet. Can you come on Friday?'

Brown expressed pleasure at the thought.

"Yes." continued Jones, "we're having a small party. Er—my daughter's coming out, you know."

Brown scratched his head meditatively His mind wavered. A stab of sudden recollection came to him.

I've just remembered, old chap," said he. "Our Jim's coming out on Friday. He's had fifteen days.'

Jones looked pained.

"But," added his old friend, "how long's your daughter had?"

Excellent Coffee.

'Well, does your husband still drink?"

'Yes, mother, and it is worrying the life out of me."

"Did you try the plan of breaking him of the habit that I suggested to you?"

'Yes"

Did you put whisky in his coffee?"

'Yes."

"What did he say?"

"He said I was the only woman he had seen since his mother died who knew how to make coffee as it should be made."

Skipping to the Last Chapter.

"Have you read the Bible?" asked the serious young man.

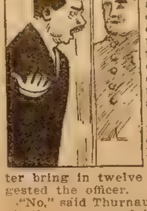
"Well," replied the frank young woman, "I can't say that I have read all of it."

"I see! You have read Genesis and Revelations."

"How did you know?"

'That's the way a woman always reads a book."

A Juryman's Jab.



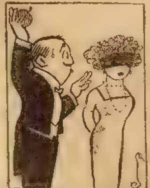
"Once upon a time" C. M. Thurnauer served upon a murder jury. For hours and hours the body deliberated—eleven agreed upon a verdict, but the twelfth obdurately refusing to change his position. Finally, a court officer rapped at the door and inquired as to the prospects of agreement.

"None in sight," responded the thoroughly disgusted C. M.

"Perhaps I had better bring in twelve suppers then," suggested the officer.

"No," said Thurnauer, glaring viciously at the unpersuadable member, "bring eleven suppers and one feed of hay."

Something Like It.



"Ladies and gentlemen," said the entertainer, "having blindfolded my partner, I now proceed to test her thought-reading powers. I have in my hand an apple. Will you kindly tell the audience what it is that I am holding in my hand?"

"An apple."

"Correct. I have here a watch. Kindly tell the audience what I have."

"A watch."

"Quite right. You see' ladies and gentlemen, it is impossible to catch her."

The entertainer produced a piece of wood and a saw, and commenced to saw vigorously.

"Kindly tell the audience what I am doing."

No reply.

"This is a rather difficult feat, ladies and gentlemen. I will try again. Can you tell me what I am doing?" said the entertainer, continuing his sawing.

"Yes. You are singing."

Loud applause.

The Absurd Jokes.

"How absurd some of the jokes about married people are!" said he.

"Aren't they?" laughed his fiancee.

"I read some today about married men having to wash the dishes, and that sort of thing."

"Perfectly ridiculous!"

"As if a man ever would have to wash the dishes after he got married!"

"Silly!"

"Seems to me they could find something funnier than that to print."

"Indeed, yes!"

How does anybody ever happen to write such nonsense?"

"But, dearest —'

"Yes, my angel?"

"You do know how to wash dishes, don't you?"

A Cruel Question.

Skeezicks' car had turned turtle, and as he sat gloomily contemplating the situation Uncle Silas reined in his nag.

"Turned over, hain't she?" he observed.

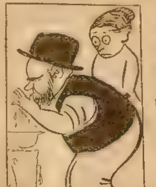
'Yep," said Skeezicks, shortly.

"Want to sell?" asked Uncle Silas.

Yes," said Skeezicks. "I'll sell out cheap."

"What's your upset price?" asked Uncle Silas with a grin.

The Boundary Mark.



"Poor old Alf!" sighed Mrs. Crimp as the form of her husband vanished down the road "He's growin' shockin' bald!"

"Yes, I've noticed it" assented her neighbor "Ever since his last illness he's been moltin', as you might say. I hope he ain't worryin' over it, Mrs Crimp."

"Well, it do bother him a bit," she admitted.

"And well it might," said her neighbor. "When my old man lost his hair he felt the cold somethin' terrible.

"Oh, it ain't the cold that worries Alf," replied Mrs. Crimp. "It's the bother he has when he's washin' himself. If he doesn't keep his hat on, poor dear, he can't tell where his face finishes '

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The Young Settlers;

Or, In the Days of Daniel Boone

By Captain Jack Judson

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE FOREST FORT.

THE reader must not suppose that the absence of Jack occasioned no concern among his friends at Boonesborough. Justin was much perturbed over his peril, and hastened to enlist the sympathies of Old Baldy. This famous backwoodsman listened with eagerness to the young borderer's story, and said at once that Jack should not remain long in the hands of his foes, if he could prevent it.

"I owe the red varmints many a grudge," said the old man. "An' I won't be satisfied till I pay 'em off. We'll take the trail, my boy, an' if I meet any of the rascals, may the good Lord hev mercy on 'em!"

It did not take Old Baldy long to announce that he was ready to set out on the expedition which had for its purpose the rescue of Jack, provided he had not been slain by the Shawnees.

We left Jack and Gentle Fawn, as the reader will remember, in the canoe in which they were trying to elude their enemies, after the death of Crouching Catamount by the girl's rifle. They had escaped from the fury of Mattabasin, the Mad Queen, and had made the alarming discovery that the canoe contained a number of deadly rattlesnakes which the demented creature had capture alive in the forest. To come in contact with such peril was enough to blanch the cheeks of the young couple, but they were not slow to get rid of the terrible things.

"We must rid ourselves of their fangs or perish!" cried Lucy, as she sprang at the hissing heads with uplifted oar.

In a moment she was raining blows at the hideous heads in startling rapidity. She was soon joined by Jack, who seemed for the nonce to forget all other danger, and in a few seconds they had conquered the serpents and the last one was tossed overboard. Then they pulled frantically toward the shore.

As the canoe reached the bank, a volley was sent after them from the Indian rifles, but the leaden missiles whistled harmlessly over their heads, and they darted into the woods. Safety lay far beyond the spot where they had landed, but this did not dampen their spirits. They were not long putting as much space between them and their foes as possible.

As far as they could observe, the woods lay before them. Its dark and dangerous trails offered but little security, for these were known to the scarlet terrors of the wilderness. At any moment they expected to hear behind them the whoops of their pursuers, and this expectation goaded them on with renewed vigor.

Suddenly there fell upon their ears from the left a voice which brought them to a halt, and the following instant a cry of joy welled from Jack's throat. He threw up his hand and answered in like strain. There came forward through the timber two figures which did not halt until they came abreast of the waiting pair.

"Better luck than sense," drawled Old Baldy, as he surveyed Jack and Gentle Fawn. "So you've given the reds the slip? Well, my boy, you haven't forgotten yer trainin'."

"Not quite," answered Jack, as he released Justin's hand. "We've had hard times, but now we're safe."

"That depends," said Old Baldy, dubiously. "Don't forget that we're still on dark an' bloody ground."

"That is true, but we're four now."

The little party once more turned their faces toward Boone's fort.

"When you folks a' out o' danger, I'm goin' back to give the red wolves a taste of Neverfail," ejaculated the old hunter. "I hope Gentle Fawn didn't miss Mike Nullen?"

"I merely winged him," answered Lucy, with a smile. "He has his sting yet, Captain Sims."

"Jes' what I want 'im to hev," was the reply. "I've got a great big grudge to settle with that varmint."

The declining sun was filling the forest with long shadows, when Lucy, in stepping over a fallen tree, was suddenly thrown backward by a hidden vine, and when she attempted to rise, she uttered a cry of pain. Her ankle had been so sorely wrenched that she was unable to keep her feet. She looked into the faces of her friends with a sigh of disappointment.

"You can go on and leave me," she said, heroically.

"Not for a moment!" cried Jack.

Old Baldy uttered a cry.

"There's a clearin'!" said he, "an' I doubt not that we'll find a cabin, if the Injuns hevn't burned it."

They pushed on, the boys supporting Lucy, and presently a well built hut greeted them. It offered shelter, if nothing more, and the door, which was still in good condition, swung back at Old Baldy's push, and all entered.

"We kin house here for the night," remarked the old man. "It will give us time to look after Miss Lucy's hurt an' prepare for the rest o' the journey."

The night seemed to come down upon the landscape with the swiftness of a falling arrow.

They discovered that the cabin was well adapted to defense, and at once began to make it yet stronger. The jerked venison, which Old Baldy and Justin had brought with them from the fort, served for a scanty meal, and the old man said he would take a little scout to see whether the forest was free from enemies. It did not take long for him to report. His reappearance was sudden enough to startle those whom he had left behind. He burst into the cabin and stood for a moment without speech.

"I guess we're in a tight box," said he, at last.

"Indians?"

"The woods seems full o' 'em!"

His young listeners were silent.

"Now don't git scared," he went on, after a slight pause. "We've got good stout logs between us an' the reds, and several good rifles to hold 'em at bay."

For all this the fear of an Indian attack hovered over the situation.

"They don't seem to hev trailed us," Old Baldy observed. "If they discover us, it will be in the nature o' an accident, so we'll keep cool an' our peepers open till we find them about us."

No light was struck in the cabin, though the hearth afforded a place for one, and all began to wait for whatever was to come. The door was barricaded with a stout plank, which was found near it, and the watch began.

Lucy said nothing about her hurt, which gave her much pain, but, with her hand on her rifle, reclined on a lot of skins that filled one corner of the cabin.

"I believe we shall escape discovery," said Jack, when the hour of midnight came. "The Indians must have missed us, and——"

He was silenced by a low ejaculation from Old Baldy.

"Something's out thar," said the backwoodsman, "whether Injun or panther I don't know."

All listened amid the profound silence that followed this observation, though they could barely make out one another's outlines in the gloom which prevailed. The sharp ears of the old frontiersman had not deceived him. A soft footstep had been heard on the outside of the cabin, and then had died away as though the maker had withdrawn.

Justin felt a hand encircle his wrist and he was drawn forward. A pair of lips touched his ear.

"It wasn't a beast," said Old Baldy. "The Injuns ar' jes' smellin' around, an' they kin smell a white man at forty yards."

Justin's heart was in his throat, but he did not speak. Presently the door moved slightly, despite the barricade.

"What did I tell ye, lad?" whispered the old man.

"I felt the door quiver."

"Exactly. Now don't breathe ef you kin help it."

Another minute of silence passed. Something moved around the cabin.

"They're jes' investigatin'," observed Old Baldy, in fearless tones. "When they war last here they evidently found the door open, but now——"

He broke his own sentence and did not proceed. Jack now stole to Justin's side and put his lips close to his face.

"There's some one outside, Justin."

"Yes, Jack. Indians!"

"Then, it's a fight for life."

"It looks that way, Jack."

Jack retired and went over to where Lucy lay on the rough pallet.

"You're awake?" he said.

"Never more so," was the low reply. "What's up?"

"The enemy is outside."

The brave girl sat up and clutched her rifle.

"I'm not hurt now," he heard her say, in a clear, brave voice. "We will give the fiends the best we have."

Jack went over to the door. He brushed against Old Baldy, who put out his hand and touched him.

"I've been in places jes as tight as this one," he heard their old ally say. "Old Baldy never says die till the last breath leaves his body. We'll make an openin' in the red ranks before they're done with us, eh, boy?"

"That we will!" returned Jack, courageously.

The very silence in the forest was enough to keep every nerve on the alert. For some time it continued; then all at

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Within the last few days many, many Deaf people have asked me to repeat the free offer which I made in the Chicago Ledger last January to all Deafness sufferers.

The letters have been filled with the most pitiful appeals for help. They have told me of the terrible loneliness, the cruel setting aside of the sufferer from the active pleasures and duties of life. "I would rather die, Doctor, than be Deaf, but I know I am doomed" is the burden of many a letter.

Were I to think of only this side of the picture I should be desperate. But every one of the letters contained also this: "A friend of mine was cured of Deafness by your treatment. Please repeat again that offer of Deafness Treatment Free, that I, too, may see your method. Surely what you have done for others you can do for me."

I have sent the Free treatments. I know only too well with what heartburnings of discouragement the pers[illegible] with the [illegible] occasional noises in the ear—the occasional [illegible] cold—the gradual loss of keen hearing—[illegible]izes that he or she is slowly, but surely being imprisoned in a tomb of silence, none the less horrible because of the forewarnings. And so, thankful as I am to help these friends of my cured patients, I cannot rest until I say again

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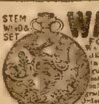

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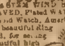

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once there rang out a yell which seemed to echo throughout the darkness.

"What did I tell ye?" said the old man.

The ferocious sound had scarcely died away ere something fell against the door.

"It will take more than a lunge like that," laughed Old Sims. "The unseen foe seemed to draw back. The boys heard the clear click of the old borderer's weapon.

He put his eye to a little porthole at one side of the door, and suddenly uttered a sharp cry. Something had come in contact with his optic. The following moment he seized a rifle barrel and wrenched it loose from its owner's hand, but the aperture was too small for him to pull it inside. In another second he had trust his own weapon through the porthole, and a shot rang out. There was a cry of pain, and then the whole forest seemed full of yells

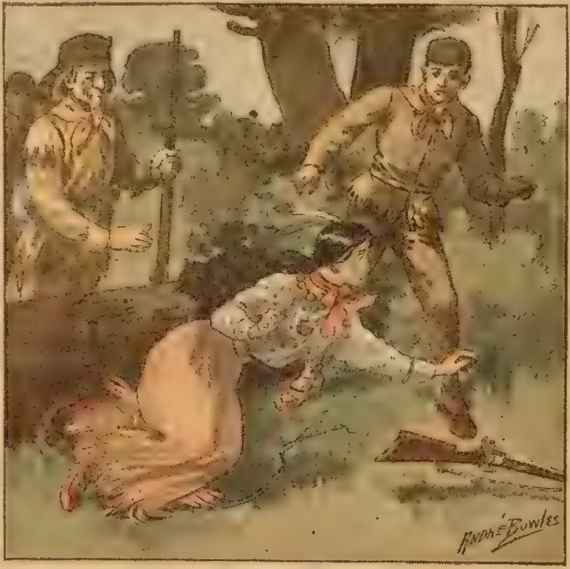
I calkerlate one Injun has gone to the happy huntin' grounds," flashed Old Baldy, as he stepped aside and rammed home another ball. "The fight has opened, an' now may the best side win!"

CHAPTER XIV.

HUMAN WOLVES.

The fight at the forest refuge had indeed opened. The inmates could not see how many foes they had to contend with, but that there were all they cared to confront was apparent. Gentle Fawn rose from her cot and came forward, rifle in hand. Her hurt in the excitement of the moment seemed to give her no trouble. She was as cool as the coolest, and when Jack felt her at his side, he was thrilled by the contact.

The main fear was that the Indians would fire the cabin, and thus force its defenders into the open, where they would have but little chance with the mad horde. All at once the outside noises grew strangely still. Not a sound of any kind reached the ears of the little band thus brought to bay. The whole forest held a deathlike stillness which boded no good.



She uttered a cry of pain.

"They're up to some devilment," spoke Old Baldy. "I shouldn't be surprised if they had some rascally whites to counsel them, but whites or no, we'll stay whar we ar' an' fight it out!"

An hour passed. Old Baldy grew anxious. He could not contrive what the stillness meant. Was it possible that the Shawnees had given up the strife and withdrawn?

"I guess I'll take an observation," said the old hunter, at last

"What, open the door and let the demons in?" cried Justin.

"The last thing to think of," was the answer. "I'm goin' up the chimney like a weasel."

Promptly suiting action to words, Sims went to the hearth, and drew his lank body up into the spacious flue, which was wide enough to accommodate him. The trio heard his scrambling and waited. Old Baldy had not much difficulty in getting to the top of the chimney, and in another moment was looking over it into the forest below. After awhile he got upon the roof and squatted like a toad there.

Not far from the cabin grew a large tree, whose branches almost touched the cabin. He could make out the outlines of this forest giant, and after a brief observation he moved down the sloping roof and laid hold of the nearest limb. It took but a slight exertion on his part to land himself in the tree itself, where he hugged the stout branches and used his eyes.

As his eyes became accustomed to the darkness that prevailed, he discerned an object which seemed to be crouching at the foot of the oak. That it was an Indian he well knew. He had left his rifle in the cabin, but the scalping knife which he invariably carried was in his buckskin belt, and when the dark thing on the ground came within his range of vision, he could hardly keep from drawing the keen and ready steel.

All at once the figure underneath stirred. It straightened out and a long arm was thrust upward. Old Baldy drew back and waited. Up the tree came the savage. The man of the woods crouched on the limb, with his knife in one hand and his eyes riveted upon the approaching foe.

As the brave threw one foot over the limb, for the purpose of drawing his half-naked body into the fork, something gripped him at the throat in a manner which stifled all outcry. The old man, whose muscles were like flexible steel, whisked the Indian to the limb beside him, and the scalping knife descended.

The very faintest gurgle came from the throat which Old Baldy released, and he laid the dead body in the fork of the tree.

"One more," he said sententiously "I'd like to hev the contract o' depopulating the tribe at this rate."

Presently he crawled back over the roof and dropped down among his anxious friends.

"They're out there yet," said he, in a whisper. "They're playin' a waitin' game, all but one."

"Why not the one?' queried Jack.

"Because I've got part o' him here."

Something wet touched Jack's hand, as the old man finished, and the boy could hardly suppress a cry.

"You're cowards, I say!" suddenly rang out a voice, which penetrated the forest fort. "You must think you're in front of Boonesborough with Daniel Boone's whole pack getting a bead on ye."

"Jes' as I said," whispered Old Baldy. "The renegades have come, an' that was Mike Nullen's voice."

"Why don't you rush the cabin?" continued the same stern voice.

"We have rushed the door," was the answer, "and Little Turtle is dead."

"What's one Indian? If you wait till daylight, there will be more warriorless tepees in the village."

"Why doesn't the White Shawnee attack the door?"

"Give me five good braves and a pole, and I'll soon have the white rats at our mercy."

"The White Shawnee shall have the warriors."

"And the pole, mind ye."

All this was heard by the silent little group within the cabin.

"The door won't stand many bumps," whispered Old Baldy. "If the varmints come with a batterin' ram, we will hev to sell out as dearly as possible."

There soon came from the forest sounds of axes, and all knew that the renegade's suggestion was being carried into effect. A battering ram was fast approaching completion.

"Ah, that is it," said Mike Nullen. "Now give me the five braves, Conestoga."

Old Baldy let out an exclamation.

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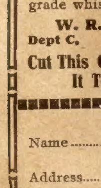

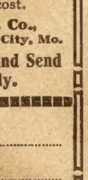

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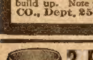

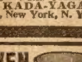

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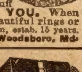

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"So the one-eyed chief leads the band," said he. "I had the satisfaction of gougin' out one o' his peepers in a rough-an'-tumble fight on the Lickin' three years ago. Doubtless he wants to get even with Baldy Sims."

Suddenly a wild whoop was heard, and something fell heavily against the forest portal.

The heavy planks strained beneath the blow, the door quivered, and the defenders of the cabin drew back with bated breath.

"Once more, my braves!" cried Mike Nullen, in a frenzy of delight. Old Baldy poked the muzzle of his rifle through the porthole at one side of the door and pressed the trigger. An Indian outside rent the air with a piercing cry.

"That's three red rats in one night!"

The attacking party now drew off, cursed by the renegade at the top of his lungs.

"You're cowards, I say!" he roared. "Why don't you go home and carry water and dress skins like your squaws?"

"Burn out the pale faces!" said an unmistakable Indian voice.

"You won't do it. No, you're too cowardly," said Nullen, in derison. "Where's your kindling?"

A blow fell upon the door.

"Ho, in there!" said voice. "We're one hundred strong and the best braves in the Shawnee nation. Open the door and save your lives. We grant you three minutes."

"Shall I speak for all?" the young people heard Old Baldy say.

"For all of us," answered Jack, boldly.

"For you, gal?"

"For me, too," said Lucy.

The old backwoodsman placed his lips at the port.

"There will be no surrender," said he. "We know what is Indian mercy. We hev seen it before. It means the tomahawk an' the stake. If you want us, you will hev to take us. That's all. Yours truly, Baldy Sims."

A series of cries greeted this defiance.

"Then you take the consequences!" was the answer from without. "I will not answer for the acts of the Indians."

"A wolf never answers for the devilment of his pack," retorted the old man.

Five minutes had not elapsed, when a startling ejaculation fell from Lucy's lips. All turned to where she stood, and saw what had caught her eye, a little flare of light at one corner of the room.

"The fire!" came through Old Baldy's tightened lips.

He sprang across the cabin and stooped in the menaced corner, as all could see by the light which found its way inside. He did not move.

There was not a drop of water within the structure, and the end seemed to be near.

All at once the old man's hands went swiftly to work. The bottom logs were dry, almost as dry as powder, and he burrowed between them like a gopher.

At once his long hands shot through the opening he had made. His bronzed fingers clutched the leaping blaze, as it were; they strangled it as a fearless man strangles a hissing snake, and in a moment the fire vanished.

Then Old Baldy stretched his long body out upon the floor and thrust his weapon between the cracks.

"Start the fire again!" cried out the white renegade. "We'll smoke them out, if it takes all the leaves of the forest."

Once more the deadliest rifle of the old frontier sent out its terrible message. A stalwart young brave dropped his burden of leaves and sank in a heap to the ground.

"They are in the chimney!" cried Jack.

At the same time he bounded to the hearth and looked up the wide opening.

Where he had once seen a coronet of stars all was dark. Pieces of mortar were falling upon the forest hearth and the boy drew back. Suddenly something just discernible alighted on the stones, and clubbing his rifle, Jack struck out boldly, to be rewarded with a cry, while an Indian fell at his feet.

"There's more than one here!" he shouted.

Justin was at his side in a moment, and as the second warrior touched the hearth, he was knocked senseless in the same manner.

"Keep the chimney clear, an' I'll attend to the fire fiends!" exclaimed Old Baldy.

It now seemed that the boys had accomplished their purpose, for no more braves ventured down the dangerous flue. Lucy was ready to help them, for she gripped her weapon and awaited the next venturesome foe.

"For the last time," sang out the voice of Mike Nullen. "Shall it be mercy or death?"

"Your mercy is death," was the answer.

No one dared relight the fire at the corner of the cabin, for fear of the old man's guardianship, and silence settled over the scene once more.

Suddenly, one of the Indians who been struck down on the hearth sprang to his feet, and the cabin rang with his war-whoop. It had barely left his lips, when both Jack and Justin threw themselves upon him, and all three spun across the puncheon floor in a terrible life-and-death struggle.

CHAPTER XV.

TREACHERY.

In spite of the valiant defense put up by the besieged party in the forest cabin, there seemed little hope of success.

Jack and Justin overcame the revived Shawnee, after a desperate struggle and without assistance. The Indian was thrown to the floor, where he was soon bound, and the defenders began to look to other matters. Twice the fire at one corner of the cabin was replenished, but

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Make a cross (X) in front of the ailments from which you suffer. Two crosses (XX) in front of the one from which you suffer most.

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......Catarrh
......Piles
......Obesity
......Skin Disease
......Impure Blood
......Rheumatism

☞ *Describe any other symptoms on a separate sheet if you wish.*

Old Baldy manfully extinguished it and finally the miscreants abandoned it. Silence once more fell over the scene.

All at once the forest rang with the reports of rifles, and the savages found themselves confronted by a number of men in buckskin, who hesitated not to deliver volleys which made havoc among the scarlet ranks. Mike Nullen, the renegade, was among the first to fly, and he deserted his friends, thus showing what an arrant coward he was when the cast of the dies was about equal.

Conestoga and his warriors slunk off into the forest, not having time to carry off their dead and wounded comrades, and Old Baldy and his friends found themselves in the midst of twenty backwoodsmen, who were on their way to Boonesborough for the purpose of aiding the garrison, which they had heard was hard pressed.

Once more within the stout stockade of the forest station the little company was warmly welcomed by Boone and his intrepid companions. All came in for their full share of praise.

On the night of their arrival at Boonesborough, a hail was heard outside the main gate.

"For mercy's sake, let me in!" said the voice, in appealing tones.

"Who is there?" asked Boone.

"David Secor, at your service."

Boone opened the gate cautiously, and a man slipped inside.

He was a person dressed in frontier costume, and he faced his observers calmly, while he breathed like one who had had a hard race through the forest.

"I've been chased by the reds," said he, in answer to Boone's query. "I live on Rapid Creek, but the Indians came upon me yesterday, and I had to flee for my life."

Old Baldy, who was watching the man with all eyes, turned away. On the old Indian fighter's face was a strange look.

"Let me see," said the old man to himself. "David Secor, eh? Seems to me that man hasn't lived on Rapid Creek for two years."

Just then Kenton joined Old Baldy.

"What think you of the new arrival?" asked Simon.

"I've been thinkin'," was the reply.

"He's Secor, all right," Kenton went on.

There was no response.

"I used to know the man," continued Simon. "But I haven't seen him for some time."

Old Baldy, who could restrain himself no longer, laid his hand on Kenton's shoulder.

"I don't like to doubt a man's word," said he, looking Simon in the eye. "Leastwise I don't like to tell a man to his face that I believe he's a fraud."

"Why, what's wrong, Sims?"

"That isn't the Dave Secor I used to know. He hasn't got the scar."

"What scar?"

"Why, the one the catamount gave Secor one day."

Kenton burst into a laugh.

"You're too incredulous, Baldy," said he. "Surely you don't think a man would have the hardihood to enter Boonesborough as a spy?"

"Some men will take desprit chances," answered the old man. "You may think him Secor if you want to, Simon; but as for Old Baldy, he'll hev his opinion, ef the heavens fall."

Kenton walked away and crossed the little plaza to where Boone stood. The next day the newcomer had freedom of the fort. He was watched by Sims, who communi suspicions to Jack and Justin.

"Keep an eye on that man," s under his breath. "He's no more Secor than I am."

"Who is he?" asked the boys in uniso

"That's more than I can tell. He here for no good."

When another night came, the guar were posted as usual, and Justin w given a station at the smaller gate near one end of the stockade.

It was a dark and stormy night. For some time great clouds had been rising from the west, and presently a heavy rain fell to further render the situation discouraging. It was just the night for an Indian surprise, but it was evident that Boone expected nothing of the kind, for he deemed the foe far away in the forests.

Justin heard a footstep approaching him.

"Keep both eyes open," said a well-known voice at his side. "Things don't look good to me."

The speaker was Old Baldy, and his words put Justin on his mettle.

"Where's the man called Secor?"

"Oh, he went to bed some time ago," was the answer. "That don't mean that he's the most innocent person in the world.

"Kenton seems to believe that he's all right."

"Simon trusts some people more than I do. He swears by the new man, which is more than Old Baldy thinks of doing."

Justin saw the old man move away, and resumed his watch. He could not believe that a spy would have the courage to put his life in jeopardy by entering Boonesborough, where certain death awaited him if he were discovered.

Once or twice, whilst Justin hugged the walls to shelter himself from the storm, he thought he heard stealthy footfalls, but they died away so quickly that he rubbed his eyes to make sure he was not dreaming.

It must have been past midnight when he became conscious that some one was near him. He had sheltered the lock of his gun to keep his powder dry, and now he looked to see that it was all right.

The storm pelted on. From the forest came no sounds. It was as though the storm fiend held undisputed sway, and had driven all living things to shelter, and that nothing was abroad but the warring elements.

Still Justin could not disabuse himself of the idea that he was not entirely alone. He dared not leave his post for fear of the unseen, and he maintained it with true courage.

This capital story will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00 and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

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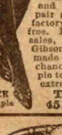

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DOUBLE THROAT CO. DEPT. D FRENCHTOWN, N. J.

Snaring Maiden Feet.

(Continued from page six.)

"Who is he asking for?" came a voice from another room.

"Mrs. Hilton."

"Well, she served her last trick here last night and left the city this morning. She's gone to live out West somewhere."

"There was a girl left to her care last night," the Sunday editor said, addressing the last speaker. "Kindly look up the record and let me know where the girl was taken, and who called for her."

The attendant leisurely rattled over a sheaf of papers and looked up sullenly.

"Just like her!" he said. "In her hurry to get away, Mrs. Hilton omitted making any report of the night's doings."

The Sunday editor and the reporter hastened back to the street, angry at the discourtesy of the police officials. Once there they faced each other grimly.

"There's some deviltry on foot here in connection with Miss Holme," the Sunday editor said, "and it is up to us to keep working on the case."

"Of course there's something wrong," the reporter agreed, "and the police are in it. Don't you think the defendants in the Holme suits would give a good many thousand dollars to get rid of the girl. She's the heir to all that property. Yes, there's something wrong, but we'll find her."

The fruitless search went on all the morning. The matron had indeed left the city for some unknown point in the West, and the name and residence of the woman who had taken Ruth away were unknown.

"It is another case of lost in the wicked city, all right," grunted Harley. "There's absolutely nothing to guide the search."

"I'm not going to give it up," declared the Sunday editor. "I'm going to go over the city with a fine-tooth comb, and the chief is with me. I'll find her if it takes me a year."

"Of course we won't give it up," Harley replied, "but we can't take a year to do the job in, for there's no knowing what troubles the girl may be having. This is a hard town for an innocent girl to be lost in."

"Indeed it is," said the Sunday editor, gravely. "I tell you, sonny," he added, "that I'm afraid. I'm afraid for the girl. There's a devil of selfishness in the city that feeds and fattens on innocent girls. Besides," he continued, with a grin, "we've got to find the girl and establish her character in order to prove the brutality of the policemen who arrested us."

"Don't you ever think we won't get even with them. The sergeant called my Star badge a cheap tin contraption! It's gold, man, and I paid a lot of money for it. 'Cheap skates' the desk sergeant called us, too. Oh, I see their faces and their records in the Star some bright Sunday morning!"

"It is unfortunate that the police matron should have left the city just at this time, isn't it? Strange that she should have sent out for a woman to come and take Ruth away. Police matrons don't do such a thing, as a rule."

"Mighty queer!" agreed the reporter. "I've been told that the resignation of the matron was handed in this morning, and that it was entirely unexpected. Perhaps she took the girl away with her! There is a colored gentleman in the shrubbery somewhere,'" he added.

"There is just one more place to look for her," the Sunday editor said. "And that is at the Shannon street morgue. She would naturally go there to see the body of her father, and so we may get track of her. Perhaps she left an address there."

"Why didn't we think of that before?" asked the reporter, and the two set off for the morgue to which the figure found in the snow on the previous night had been taken by the police.

This extremely interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger, presenting the readers with some very strange happenings. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger, you are strongly urged to send in your subscription at once. Every family should take the Ledger, as humor and stories and pictures make life brighter and pleasanter for all, bringing health and entertainment and doing every one good. Be wise and attend to this today.

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Edith—Well, my idea of a man with brains is a man with money.

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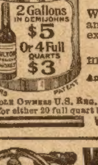

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Try My Treatment FREE

Don't spend another needless day of suffering. I will send you my **regular, full, complete, three-fold Lexoid combined course of treatment** without a penny's expense, **charges paid, to try free,** just as my unequalled offer states. **I don't mean a small, worthless sample, or a trial test treatment,** that you can't tell anything about. I mean a **regular, full treatment,** and when I say a full treatment, **I mean a full treatment,** just as I say. I will send it to you **complete—charges paid—delivered to your door—ready for you to use—so you can commence it at once.**

My treatment has helped thousands to regain their health. Those with tired, lame, aching backs, with unbearable bladder and urinary troubles, others stiff and bent with rheumatism—and it has made them well, the most chronic, severe, long-standing, obstinate cases, after all else had failed to cure them. Hundreds using my treatment in despair, have gone their way rejoicing. They were hopeless and it made them well. They were suffering, and it eased their pains, soothed their aches, brightened their lives and made them happy, and now, I offer you my wonderful treatment **to try free—take it—use it—if you want to get well.**

If you have backache, **kidney, bladder trouble or rheumatism,** dizziness, puffy swellings under the eyes or in the feet and ankles, nervousness, tired and worn-out feeling, if the urine is light and pale, dark colored or cloudy, if you make water often, getting up during the night, if it smarts and burns in passing, if there is sediment or brick dust when it stands, **you need my treatment without a minute's delay.**

Don't Continue Suffering.

My specialty is such diseases. I treat thousands of cases—helping them after all else has failed. I am successful in my life work, because I love it. I love my profession. My whole mind and soul are wrapped up in it, and I am happy. You would be happy too, if you were bringing happiness to thousands of suffering people right along, as I am now. I love to feel I am helping people to enjoy life, and I want to help you to see the bright side of life, and enjoy every minute of **true health and happiness.**

I want to help you to get well, and be strong again, so you can work, and walk, and run, and jump without pain; so you can sleep without disturbance, and wake up refreshed and rested, able to use every muscle, nerve, cord and joint of your body, without suffering misery all the time.

I want you to try my regular **full complete treatment.** My new scientific course of medicines—harmless, soothing, healing, penetrating remedies, that **reach the spot, drive away uric acid, cleanse, purify, strengthen, invigorate and encourage the kidneys to properly filter the blood. That stop the pain, give strength to the nerves, life and ambition to the mind and body, and do it quickly, quietly, without loss of time.**

My Unequaled Offer.

Now, here is my offer—I will send you a **regular, full, complete, three-fold Lexoid course of treatment, without a penny in advance—charges paid—ready to use—to try free,** just as I promise. Remember, I don't mean a **sample,** or a **trial,** or a **test,** such as others call **proof treatments. I mean a regular, full, complete course of remedies.**

Take it when it comes. **Use half of it, and see just what it does.** Then when you know it has helped you, **when you know you are getting better,** just send me a small amount, an amount within your reach—an amount you can easily afford to spare—that is all I'll ask. I know you'll be willing to do your part **when it helps you—and your word is good enough for me.** It will help you quickly. But you are to pay nothing **unless it does.** Try it first, pay afterwards when you know; **not before.** When you have used half of it, if you are not satisfied, return what's left, **and pay nothing. It doesn't cost you a penny to try my treatment**—I will send it to you charges paid, **take it, try it, and find out.**

A Full Treatment, To Try Free.

I am the only one to-day making this offer, sending a full treatment, on free trial for such diseases. You know I could not afford to do it, if I did not feel sure it would help you—if I did not know it would cure. That's why I can afford to send it first—**but you are the one to decide;** you are the one to be the judge. It must help you, it must satisfy you—**before you send a penny.** And you are the one to say. **I will take your word.** It's all left right with you yourself. What you say goes. That's all I care for. I don't want a penny unless it helps you. I would not take a cent that I am not entitled to. I believe in giving everyone a square deal—in being honest—it's my religion—I want to do what's right—that's why I am making you the **broadest, most straightforward, fairest, most liberal one-sided offer ever made.** When I have confidence enough in my treatment to send it to you this way, I know you'll **be willing to try it at my expense—that's all I ask.** Don't send a penny in your letter, **not even a postage stamp;** just your name and address and where to send the treatment. Address your letter to me personally, like this: **Dr. H. MICHELL DeWERTH, 919 Lexoid Building, Cleveland, Ohio.**

Send No Money; Just This Coupon

DR. H. MICHELL DeWERTH,
919 LEXOID BUILDING, CLEVELAND, OHIO

Please send me your regular, full, complete three-fold Lexoid Course of Treatment as you promised above, all charges paid, TO TRY FREE. Also your FREE BOOK about Uric Acid, Kidney, Bladder Trouble and Rheumatism.

My name is ....

Post Office ....

St. or R. F. D. ....**State**..............

Please Write Name and Address Plainly.

SPECIAL NOTE. Every suffering reader should write at once for Dr. DeWerth's wonderful treatment. The remedies he sends have cured thousands. His treatment is different from others, as Lexoid is a new scientific course of treatment; he alone is its only possessor. The fact that he sends a full treatment, to try free, not only shows his confidence in the treatment, but also, that he is a fair, just, broad, liberal, honest man as well, and worthy of the utmost confidence. It seems now that anyone who continues to suffer with this wonderful treatment within their reach, has no right to complain.